

School of Theology at Claremont



1001 1402918

BX
8332
H34



The Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT

WEST FOOTHILL AT COLLEGE AVENUE
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA

BX
833
H34

ILLUSTRATIVE RECORDS
OF
John Wesley
AND
EARLY METHODISM.

A
LECTURE,
FOUNDED ON MARSHALL CLAXTON'S PAINTING
OF THE
Death-Bed of the Rev. J. Wesley, A.M. :

DELIVERED IN THE
WESLEYAN SCHOOL ROOM, RED BANK, STOCKS,
MANCHESTER,
JULY 3, 1856.

BY THE
REV. SAMUEL ROMILLY HALL.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

LONDON :
HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO., PATERNOSTER ROW; SOLD ALSO
BY JOHN MASON, 66, PATERNOSTER ROW.
MANCHESTER : W. BREMNER, PICCADILLY. LEEDS : H. W. WALKER.
1856.

Theology Library

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT

California

ARRETT BIBLICAL INSTITUTE

CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS

RECEIVED FROM THE ARRETT BIBLICAL INSTITUTE
BY THE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT CLAREMONT
JANUARY 10, 1900

PREFATORY NOTE.

THIS Lecture was prepared with the design of giving an illustrative description of the "Death-bed of Wesley." Materials, however,—biographical especially,—so largely accumulated, that it was found expedient to pass over a considerable portion thereof in the delivery of the Lecture. The respectable and numerous company that favoured me with their presence, having requested the publication of the whole, it is now committed to the press, with the sincere and prayerful hope, that this slight and imperfect review of *some* of the incidents and passages of early Methodism, may promote a yet higher estimate of its worth, and a grateful remembrance of God's gracious dealings with "our fathers;" and not a less high and grateful estimate of the mercies and blessings long since embodied in Wesleyan Methodism, and perpetuated to the present day.

It is only proper to add, that no small share of the interest felt in some of the observations made, arose from the exhibition, in the school room, of Marshall Claxton's large painting of "The Death-bed of Wesley," kindly lent for the occasion by the proprietors, Messrs. Agnew and Sons. The fact of the scene itself being thus visibly pictured out to the hearers, may also explain, and if necessary, excuse, certain emphatic and elliptical phrases employed on the occasion.

S. R. H.

Lecture.

"THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL BE IN EVERLASTING REMEMBRANCE."

HISTORY has secured to John Wesley an imperishable reputation. In the face of innumerable difficulties,—against the current of his own preferences, not to say prejudices,—through a lengthened term of fifty years, with scarcely a day's interruption, or repose,—he calmly, earnestly, and successfully persevered in carrying out the purposes of his earliest consecration and zeal; until,—honoured of all good men, and surrounded by the representatives of the sacred cause that bears his name,—he was gathered home to God, and ceased at once to work and live.

The "Death-bed of Wesley" may therefore be fairly given, and safely accepted, as affording the surest test of Wesley's upright and godly life; as illustrative of the success of the revived evangelical enterprise at the head of which he so long stood; and as evidence, (so far as man is at liberty to determine such matters,) that God approved of the faithfulness of His servant, and affixed the divine seal upon his labours. The moment selected by the artist for the application of this test, is that final and solemn one, when the past links itself to the future, when the review of man's history and conduct becomes creative of his most serious anticipations, and when the consequences of life, arising out of the future condition of *other men*, run forward to give an aggravated woe or increased blessedness to one's own destiny. Wesley was pre-eminently an unselfish man. The charity that "seeketh not her own" was the most marked attribute of his piety, and duty the ruling principle of his life. Once awakened to a true sense of his obligation to God, without a moment's hesitation, he devoted himself

to the divine service. Gradually, but with an ever-extending and accumulating power, his religious opinions were brought to bear upon society ; and the result is, therefore, to be looked for, not so much in his own satisfaction and happiness, as in the weal or woe of the myriads directly or indirectly affected by his mission.

Having consecrated the learning that gained him a reputation at Oxford, and the respectability of the clerical profession, to the work of the evangelist and field-preacher ;—having endured hardness, and fearlessly confronted the rude violence of excited mobs, and braved the bitter hostility of many persons high in rank and power ;—having lived through a period of fierce polemic strife, sometimes misunderstood by friends, oft maligned by foes ;—having stood firm and faithful to his trust, when not a few abandoned a work of toil and shame, or retired to some place of comfort and repose ;—having travelled at the rate of between four and five thousand miles per annum for near half a century, visiting his societies, and variously engaged in writing, printing, preaching, governing ;—having outlived all his contemporaries, and progressively, but steadily, culminated an influence, and name, and power, never surpassed before or since ;—John Wesley closed his life of hallowed service in the way and under the circumstances pictured out by the artist.

To the professional skill and artistic taste of the painter, it is not our purpose, as it is not within our province, to speak : but we point to the death-bed scene itself, as one of surpassing interest. In *that* scene is beheld one—calm and happy in the reminiscences of a useful life, and full of joy and hope in the personal experience of the great evangelical truths he had so long preached to others—lying encircled by a godly company, the members whereof when carefully classified are found to represent the leading agents of Methodism, or are suggestive of the principles and interests that mark the eventful life of that preeminently great and good man.

Although the subject in hand relates to the *closing* scene of Wesley's earthly pilgrimage, yet it will neither be alto-

gether irrelevant, nor uninteresting, if a reference, necessarily brief, and somewhat statistical, be made to a few of the leading and most characteristic events of Wesley's life. These and similar facts and figures may be to some persons but as the mile-stones of a lengthened journey, whereby the traveler notes his progress, without deriving information respecting the country through which he passes,—whilst to the more thoughtful they may supply materials, that will explain or illustrate the numerous and progressive manifestations of God's providence and grace.

John Wesley, the second son of the Rev. Samuel Wesley, was born at Epworth, Lincolnshire, June 17th, 1703. His early education was superintended by his mother, Mrs. Susannah Wesley, daughter of the learned and pious nonconformist minister, Dr. Samuel Annesley,—herself an extraordinary woman, a scholar, a strict disciplinarian, and a watchful, affectionate, godly mother.

In 1714, John Wesley was placed at the Charter-House, London, where he prosecuted his studies with great diligence and success. When seventeen years of age, he proceeded to Christ Church College, Oxford; and soon distinguished himself by his learning, and his regular and severe manner of life. His systematic arrangements there made, for the promotion of piety amongst his pupils and friends, and the diligence with which he and his companions gave religious instruction to the poor, obtained for them the appellation of *Methodists*.

On the 14th of October, 1735, John Wesley set out for Georgia, as a missionary to the North American Indians. Frustrated in his designs, after a faithful but stern observance of the rules and discipline of his church, he took his leave of America, December 22nd, 1737, and returned to England.

An acquaintance about this time with Peter Böhler, and a few other pious Moravians, led Wesley to a clearer and more evangelical view of the mode in which a penitent believer is saved of God. On the 14th of May, 1738, he obtained the salvation of the gospel, through faith in our Lord Jesus

Christ ;* and shortly afterwards commenced field-preaching, and other special efforts for the revival of scriptural godliness throughout the land.

After a temporary connection with the Moravian brethren in Fetter Lane, and elsewhere, "in the latter end of the year, 1739," the "United Societies," of the people called Methodists, commenced. The employment of lay-preachers, and the formation of "Circuits," shortly followed.

On the 12th of May, 1739, the foundation stone of the first Methodist chapel, or "preaching-house," or "room," was laid in Bristol.

The Rules of the Society entitled, "*The Nature, Design, and General Rules, of the UNITED SOCIETIES, in London, Bristol, Kingswood, and Newcastle-upon-Tyne,*"—signed by John and Charles Wesley, are dated May 1, 1743. [A copy of these "Rules" exists, signed by John Wesley only, and dated "Feb. 23, 1742—3."] The "*Rules of the BAND SOCIETIES. Drawn up Dec. 25, 1738,*"—were generally appended to the *Society Rules*.

The first Conference was held on the 25th of June, and five following days, in the year 1744, in London, the result being published in a small tract, entitled "*Minutes of several Conversations between the Reverend Mr. John and Charles Wesley, and others.*" This tract, frequently reprinted with successive enlargements, was subsequently known as "The Large Minutes ;" the latest edition contains "Minutes," "from the year 1744 to the year 1789." At the Conference of 1797, after a lengthened and serious deliberation, this volume was revised, rearranged and enlarged, and now constitutes, according to its amended title, "*the FORM OF DISCI-*

* "In the evening I went very unwillingly to a Society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation : and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."—*Wesley's Journal, May 14, 1738.*

PLINE established among the preachers and people in the *Methodist Societies*."

By the Deed of Declaration it is required, that all "the Acts of the Conference" be entered in a journal kept for the purpose, and be subscribed, before the close of the Conference, by the President and Secretary. Such of these "Acts" as relate to the Stations of the Preachers, Connexional Finances, current Regulations, and Laws affecting the Societies, are published in the *Annual Minutes* of Conference. The *first* number of these *Annual Minutes*, is said to have been printed in the year 1765.*

Wesley's "Deed of Declaration," affixing a legal definition to the term "*Conference*," was enrolled in Chancery, on the 28th of February, 1784.

But to return more immediately to the subject in hand : In doing so it may assist us to form a better estimate of its reality and value if we pause for a moment, and note, with what intelligent and calm forethought Wesley himself anticipated his own death.

A life of the strictest temperance and most regular habits, and of constant change and exercise, had secured him an almost total exemption from physical suffering and weakness. Yet he was not unmindful, as years advanced upon him, that life was necessarily drawing towards its close. When he had numbered fourscore years he says,—“My eyes are not waxed dim : and what little strength of body or mind I had thirty years since just the same I have now. God grant I may never live to be useless ! Rather may I

My body with my charge lay down,
And cease at once to work and live.”

Two years later John Wesley says, “It is twelve years since

* “*Minutes of some late Conversations, between the Rev. Mr. Wesleys, and others. Bristol : Printed by William Pine, in Narrow-Wine-Street, 1765.*” The distinction between “*several conversations*,” (“the Large Minutes”) and “*some late conversations*,” (“the Annual Minutes”) was kept up from 1765 till 1790. Upon the death of John Wesley this distinction was dropped,—why, it is not known.

I have felt any such sensation as weariness." [Only a week or two before he had preached four times in one day, and travelled some considerable distance.] "I am never tired," he adds, "(such is the goodness of God,) either with writing, preaching, or travelling."

When eighty-four years old, he again carefully reviews his life, and having recently suffered some slight pain, he remarks, "Whether or not this is sent to give me warning that I am shortly to quit this tabernacle, I do not know : but be it one way or the other, I have only to say,

My remnant of days
I spend to his praise,
Who died the whole world to redeem :
Be they many or few,
My days are his due,
And they all are devoted to him."

The next year,—sight and strength and memory to some extent failing him,—he fairly and for the first time fully admits,—"I now find I grow old."

On Monday, June the 28th, 1790, he says, "This day I enter into my eighty-eighth year. For above eighty-six years I found none of the infirmities of old age ; my eyes did not wax dim, neither was my natural strength abated : but last August I found almost a sudden change. My eyes were so dim that no glasses would help me. My strength likewise now quite forsook me ; and probably will not return in this world. But I feel no pain from head to foot ; only it seems nature is exhausted ; and humanly speaking, will sink more and more, till

The weary springs of life stand still at last."

Thus calmly, and with a clear and strong regard to the obligations of his stewardship, did John Wesley approach the solemn period when he must exchange mortality for life, and appear before God.

He died on the 2nd of March, 1791. On the 12th of the preceding January, he reports better health than he had enjoyed for several months before ; yet on the following month

Miss Ritchie (who had recently taken up her residence at the preacher's house, in London, and who was the faithful and watchful nurse of her venerable friend,) observed that his "strength declined much." At the beginning of the year John Wesley had written to a friend at Philadelphia, "Those that desire to write or say anything to me, have no time to lose; *for time hath shaken me by the hand, and death is not far behind.*" The question, however, of another journey to Ireland, was at this time only a matter of "*doubt*;" for, to Adam Clarke, who was stationed in Dublin, he writes on the 9th of February, "it is a doubt with me whether I shall cross the seas any more." But to Mr. Ogilvie, residing at Alnwick, in the North of England, he writes about a fortnight afterwards, "it is not improbable that I may look upon you in the spring." On the following day, February the 22nd, he writes to his friend Mr. Walter Churchey, of Brecon, "next week I hope to be in Bristol,"—"next week" he was in heaven!* Early in this same month he made an engagement to be at Stourport on the 18th; this letter, however, had been mislaid,—but when found was sent off with the following postscript, dated "February 28th.—This morning I found this in my bureau;" *the last line most probably that John Wesley ever penned*, and written within two days of his death.

This faithfulness in service,—even to the latest hour,—presents one pleasing and satisfactory evidence, amongst others, of the true and godly principle by which this apostolic man had been moved throughout his lengthened life. The remaining test has now to be considered.

Wesley fairly ranks as one of the greatest reformers that this, or any other country, has ever known. At a time when spiritual darkness overspread the entire nation, and its churches rested in a slumber like unto death, he arose, and passed through the length and breadth of the land, and by the energy of his spotless character, his indomitable courage,

* The signature only is in the hand-writing of Wesley.

and his commanding* ministrations of the word of life, awoke up thousands of his countrymen to an impassioned concern respecting the personal enjoyments of religion, and a new belief regarding the realities of an invisible world. Earnest—though always calm himself—he moved all around him into action; with a perseverance that never admitted of a moment's mistrust of God, he watchfully sustained throughout two generations the work he had been permitted to commence;—the strictest disciplinarian, and from earliest training, and on the highest principle, the devoted lover of order, he shrunk from no consequences in the enforcement of whatever he interpreted as the divine will;—not partial, from any early training, to the dissidents from the established form of religion in this land, and preserving to his latest hour an unfaltering attachment to it and its clergy, he gradually discovered that his whole life was being occupied in the formation of a system, that year by year brought him nearer to a friendly intercourse with godly persons of other re-

* A notion prevails that Wesley was a short, calm, unimpassioned preacher. The fact is, he sometimes preached very long sermons. As to his *manner* of address,—the Rev. Samuel Bradburn, who heard him frequently, testifies to his “powerful eloquence.” “He often used,” Mr. Bradburn says, “bold and figurative expressions;” and “never appeared greater in my esteem than when the vast conceptions of his towering soul seemed to beggar all the extravagancies of *hyperbole*. Yet he knew how ‘to contain the fury of his fancy within the bounds of reason.’—As an orator he was a perfect model to every Christian minister.”

Although the genealogical lines of the Wesley and Wellesley families have never intermingled, (as sometimes supposed,) yet the likeness in character and habit, if in nothing else, between John Wesley and “the Duke,” is very marked. From several traditionary illustrations I have received, I gather that this likeness was, in no small degree, expressed in the *manner* of Wesley’s preaching. He, who was born to *govern*, carried the spirit and power of his commission into the pulpit: his were—what we have called “*commanding ministrations*.” His utterance was short, abrupt, military—the word of one “*having authority*,” yet, withal, blended with a divine influence, whereby, as Mr. Bradburn declares, “his holy soul has been elevated with heavenly joy; and drawn out by supernatural assistance to a great degree of devout ardour.”

ligious communities, and farther from a rigid adherence to the services and rites of the national church ;—the foremost promulgator of a revived Protestantism ;—the most earnest advocate of the various benevolent and religious institutions that were then arising to bless mankind, and now constitute the greatest glory of the British empire ;—and the founder of the largest section of the Christian church in Christendom ;—that moment is fixed upon by the artist when the truest and sternest test is to be applied to the principles, and professions, and practices of this lengthened and ever active, and most eventful life.

Such a scene presents a study of human nature, and a trial of human conduct, of the highest possible worth. As a test of character, it is one of stirring interest, but when viewed as declarative of a single life, involving in its own conduct, the wellbeing of myriads, it is one of the deepest moment. Our own high estimate of the man is readily and safely made ; but what is of greater import, the judgment of the man upon himself is with certainty obtained—obtained just at that instant when, with an intelligent consciousness of the inseparable connection between life and eternity, he himself passes forward to face the multitudes he had influenced, and to realise, *in their future condition*, results that must for ever affect his own character and destiny.

Under these circumstances, then, the pencil of the artist reveals to us the facts of history, and makes manifest a verdict the most certain and welcome. He who for more than fifty years had professed to be engaged in the “work of God,” and who had so uniformly and unhesitatingly announced God’s presence with him as the source of his strength and comfort, now, as the shades of the valley spread upon his pathway—and the rays of the bright world above flash upon his spirit—at that awful moment he declares—with all the emphasis of a grateful faith just blending into sight—
“THE BEST OF ALL IS GOD IS WITH US !”

Dr. Whitehead, who was Wesley’s medical attendant, and in whose friendship and professional ability he reposed the

most implicit confidence, officially reports as follows :—" I was called to Mr. Wesley on Friday the twenty-fifth of February. When I entered the room he cheerfully said, ' Doctor, they are more afraid than hurt.' I found great oppression on the brain, a universal tremor, great debility of the whole nervous system, and a fever, which I considered as symptomatic depending wholly on the state of debility. I wrote for him ; but he neither took medicine nor nourishment in a quantity sufficient to be of any use. Friday night and Saturday forenoon the lethargic symptoms increased. It now appeared to me that the powers of nature were exhausted ; and I was so certain of his approaching dissolution, that I desired Mr. Bradford to ask him if he had any affairs which he wished to settle ; or if there was any person either in London or in the country whom he desired to see. To these questions he gave no answer. We were all extremely anxious that the lethargy might be removed before his departure hence ; and on Saturday evening the means made use of were successful : the lethargic symptoms abated, and on Sunday morning he seemed quite in possession of his faculties, and to feel his situation. His debility however increased, and the fever continued with alternate changes of flushings and paleness. On Monday, the 28th, I desired he might be asked if he would have any other physician called in to attend him : but this he absolutely refused. On Tuesday, it appeared to me that death was approaching, and in the evening this was very evident. I was with him till past twelve o'clock that night. I asked him, before I left the room, if he knew me, he answered yes, and pressed my hand with all the little strength he had. From this time he gradually sunk, and about twenty minutes before ten on Wednesday morning, the 2nd of March, he died without a struggle, or a groan, and went to receive the glorious reward of his labours."

Dr. Whitehead's professional aid was sought for on Friday, the 25th of February. On this day and the following one, Wesley spoke but little. By Sunday, the 27th, however, the stupor that oppressed him passed away, and Wesley, though exceedingly feeble, was collected and cheerful. During this

day he repeated the latter part of one of the scriptural hymns on "*Forsake me not when my strength faileth.*"

"Till glad I lay this body down
Thy servant, Lord, attend,
And O! my life of mercy crown
With a triumphant end!"

In the afterpart of the same day he remarked—"When at Bristol, in the year 1783, and in the immediate prospect of death, my words were—'*I the chief of sinners am, but Jesus died for me.*'" Being asked—"Is this the present language of your heart, and do you feel as you then did?" He instantly replied "Yes."

Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers, who was present on the occasion, feelingly records in her "Experience," "the solemnity of the dying hour of that great good man." "A cloud of the Divine presence," she says, "rested on all; and while he could hardly be said to be an inhabitant of earth, being now speechless, and his eyes fixed, victory and glory were written on his countenance, and quivering, as it were, on his dying lips! No language can paint what appeared in that face! The more we gazed upon it, the more we saw of heaven unspeakable! *Not the least sign of pain, but a weight of bliss.* Thus he continued, only his breath growing weaker and weaker, till, without a struggle or a groan, he left the cumbrous clay behind, and fled to eternal life in the bosom of his faithful Lord."

And Miss Ritchie—whose narrative of John Wesley's last days was printed and circulated throughout the connexion immediately after his decease, and is the chief source whence Wesley's biographers derive their information respecting the closing scene—says, "On Tuesday, March 1st, Mr. Wesley conversed with his friend, Mr. Bradford, upon affairs relating to the connexion. He was afterwards much exhausted, and, while sitting in his chair, was observed to change for death. His voice failed, and we were obliged to lay him down on the bed, from which he rose no more. After lying still and sleeping a little, he said, 'Betsy, you, Mr. Bradford, and the

rest pray and praise.' We kneeled down, and truly our hearts were filled with a sense of the Divine presence; the room seemed to be filled with God." After relating some instructions Wesley gave respecting his funeral, and noting some affecting interviews with a few of his friends, the narrative proceeds,—“The next pleasing and awful scene was the great exertion he made in order to make Mr. Broadbent understand that he desired a sermon which he had written on the love of God should be scattered abroad, and given to everybody. Something else he would have said, but, alas! his speech failed; and those lips which used to feed many, were no longer able to convey their accustomed sounds. Finding that we could not understand what he said, he paused a little, and then, with all his remaining strength, cried out, ‘THE BEST OF ALL IS GOD IS WITH US!’—and then, as if to assert the faithfulness of our promise-keeping Jehovah, and comfort the hearts of his weeping friends, *lifting up his dying arm in token of victory, and raising his feeble voice with a holy triumph not to be expressed, he again repeated the heart-reviving words, ‘GOD IS WITH US!’*”

“On Wednesday morning we found that the closing scene drew near. Mr. Bradford, his faithful friend and most affectionate son in the Gospel prayed with him; and the last word he was heard to articulate was ‘Farewell!’ A few minutes before ten, while we were kneeling around his bed; according to his often-repeated desire, without a lingering groan, this man of God gathered up his feet in the presence of his brethren. We felt what is inexpressible. The ineffable sweetness that filled our hearts as our beloved pastor, father, and friend, entered into his Master’s joy, for a few moments blunted the edge of our painful feelings on this glorious yet melancholy occasion.”

As yet revelations of the other world afford us but little knowledge of the state and employ of departed saints. St. Paul was not allowed to utter what he beheld when in the third heavens; and the men of Galilee that stood gazing up into heaven, when their ascending Lord withdrew from earth,

soon found a curtain drawn between them and the everlasting gates and the attendant angels. What took place, therefore, when the sainted spirit of Wesley, freed of its material tenement, first burst upon the beatific vision, it is not for us to say, or even to imagine. Around that memorable death-bed ministering spirits may have watched to give the first direction homeward and heavenward to their liberated and happy companion; beyond the bright clouds a convoy of holy angels may have awaited to inaugurate his triumph; the high portals of heaven would be uplifted with acclaiming welcomes; and a cloud of rejoicing witnesses encircle the glorified and new inhabitant of heaven, when entering upon the possession of his long expected and prepared inheritance! But—what took place before the throne, when the palm was received and the crown won, it is not for us to know. From the certain, though as yet undiscovered, glories of that awful and blissful scene, we therefore turn again to the “death-bed” itself,—and gratefully recognise, in the “weight of bliss” that appeared, we are told, in “that face,”—in the “victory and holy triumph” which so marked the occasion,—and in the “ineffable sweetness” that filled all hearts present,—in these things we recognise the true and gracious tokens of the reward brightening into vision,—and the first scintillations of that eternal weight of glory upon which the good and faithful servant was just then about to enter.

THE GROUP OF WITNESSES.

In addition to the leading and prominent object of the picture, the artist has succeeded in arranging a group of persons around the death-bed of Wesley with striking effect. Considerable interest is given to this group by the fact that a strong personal attachment to Wesley was felt by most of the individuals present; their intimate and, in some instances, long connexion with him, rendering their presence, when receiving his last “farewell,” most natural and appropriate.

Mr. and Mrs. Rogers, Miss Elizabeth Ritchie, and some others present resided on the premises. Mrs. Sarah Wesley, relict of Charles, the poet, is mentioned as visiting her

revered relative ; and Miss Wesley is noted as being in frequent attendance upon him. Dr. Whitehead, Robert Carr Brackenbury, Esq., and John Horton, Esq., together with Messrs. Bradford, Broadbent, and Whitefield, are particularly named as present on the occasion. The Rev. Peard Dickinson and the Rev. James Creighton were Wesley's clerical assistants in the adjoining chapel, and having laboured with their honoured friend in life, would not be absent from him at, or near, the time of death. But, well calculated as the picture is to excite attention because of the personal friends introduced, far greater and deeper interest spreads over the whole scene, when the parties are severally viewed as *representatives* of those marked features that belong to the character and history of Wesleyan Methodism, and of the readily defined classes, or ranks, into which the United Societies may be fairly and easily distributed.

Without waiting to discuss the question of Wesley's providential designation to be the founder of a new religious order, we think the time has come when we are authorised to take the standing facts of history as sufficient to determine the case. Possessing, in his own person, an extraordinary and commanding power of action and endurance, he appeared specially fitted to take and to keep the lead in the great religious movement of the day. Other men might indeed be named, who, for a time, were highly favoured of God, and who laboured with an energy and zeal, equal to Wesley's ; but they soon passed away, and the results of their labours were, in many instances, shortly lost sight of—if not forgotten. Wesley, however, possessed not only the wondrous power of setting all around him in motion, but of creating, wherever the gospel he preached was successful, a principle of living co-operation on the part of others, that resulted in an agency, (not originally a *system*,) but a Christian *agency*, that gave a remarkable power and permanency to the *Wesleyan* form of Methodism. The preachers were his "sons in the gospel"—gratefully willing and faithful in service. Not a few persons of rank and wealth were ready to acknowledge their obligations to Wesley as their spiritual father and

guide ; and were well pleased to join him in plans and purposes of usefulness. And although the clergy of the national church, as a body, either neglected or resented Wesley's overtures of union, yet, now and then, a few distinguished by eminent piety and zeal, associated themselves with him, either in friendly sympathy, or in active service. And throughout the land many an "elect lady," of high culture and godly character, delighted in being his favoured correspondent and helper.

With complete success the artist has pictured before us, perhaps, not by design, but in fact, and as the result of a truthful regard to providence and history, *representatives* of these several classes standing related to Wesley, either by family ties, or personal friendship, or willing service.

THE WESLEY FAMILY.

Descended through several generations of godly progenitors, the Wesley family, at Epworth, might have fairly prided itself upon its honoured and hallowed antecedents. Samuel, the father—John, the grandfather—and Bartholomew, the great-grandfather—of John Wesley, were divines of no mean order ; and all of them, in their own peculiar way, severally proved themselves men of high honour and of stern integrity. On the mother's side, the stream may be traced back by a very short course to noble birth and high distinction,—for Dr. Samuel Annesley, the father of Mrs. Wesley, was nephew to the Earl of Anglesea. But what is of greater consequence—especially as bearing upon the character and habits of his daughter, and as explanatory in part of her extraordinary talents and pre-eminent virtues—he was a diligent student of holy scripture, and a godly minister of the Lord Jesus Christ. He lived in troublous times, and was deservedly held in high repute by the leading nonconformists, with whom he chiefly associated.

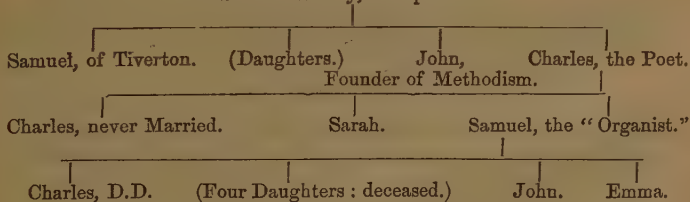
The home-circle that flourished within the Epworth parsonage at the beginning of the last century is, perhaps, the most remarkable on record. "Such a family," Dr. A. Clarke says, "I have never read of, heard of, or known ; nor, since

the days of Abraham and Sarah, and Joseph and Mary of Nazareth, has there ever been a family to which the human race has been more indebted." Samuel and Susannah Wesley, the parents, bravely struggled with difficulties of the most formidable and oppressive kind. They endured distress and poverty as the result—to employ the father's own words—of "sicknesses, fire, and inundations." The bitterness of party-spirit, also, taking advantage of Wesley's poverty brought him into straits, and even imprisonment, that entailed upon his family inconceivable privation and suffering; but the noble-hearted and intelligent mother maintained her courage in the midst of all; and by her perseverance, and piety, and wisdom, encircled herself with a number of sons and daughters, not surpassed for high education and virtue by any family in the land. Unhappily, at that time, the limited circle in which the daughters moved, afforded few elements in sympathy with their own refined tastes and cultivated minds. Several of the marriages proved unfortunate; and wedded life became a period of suffering and sorrow. The sons, however, Samuel, John, and Charles, diverged in early life into a broader sphere. Samuel acquired considerable scholarship; and became a teacher of youth, as well as a clergyman. His high churchmanship forbid his giving such a sanction to the "irregularities" of his brothers, as his moral feeling and kindness might have prompted him to; but his religious views were graciously improved towards the close of life; and he is represented as dying, at the forty-ninth year of his age, in a happy assurance of a saving interest in the death of Christ. Both Samuel, the elder brother, and John, the founder of Methodism, died without issue,—so that the "Wesley family" of later times branches out of Charles, "the poet of Methodism."

Charles Wesley, who married Sarah, the daughter of Marmaduke Gwynne, Esq., of Garth, in Breconshire, had eight children, all whom, with the exception of Charles, Sarah, and Samuel, died in infancy. Charles and Sarah never married. The line of the Wesley genealogy is therefore again limited to one branch—namely, *Samuel*, the youngest son of Charles.

Samuel, "the organist," as he was generally called, was born at Bristol, in 1766. He gave early indications of musical genius, being a master of thorough bass without instruction; and the composer of the Oratorio of Ruth at eight years of age. His acquirements in the classics were considerable, and his love of literature surpassed his passion for music. With regret and shame, it ought perhaps to be added, that, ensnared by the world, he abandoned the faith of his ancestors, and forsook that path of high virtue in which those who bore his name had so long and so consistently walked. He had seven children, four died in childhood, and three survive their parent. Charles, the eldest son, was born in 1797,—educated at Christ College, Cambridge,—ordained priest in 1823,—and subsequently appointed chaplain to William IV. and Queen Victoria; he officiates at the Royal Chapel, bearing the ancient title of "*confessor*" of her Majesty's household; he received the degree of D.D. in 1838; and was appointed sub-dean of her Majesty's chapels in 1847. He has no son to perpetuate the Wesley name. John, the only other son of Samuel, the organist, was born in 1803. For some years he held a respectable clerkship situation in London,—and was said to possess no small share of the classic taste and wit for which his ancestors were remarkable. Emma, the youngest, married Mr. Newenham, and settled at Stoke-Newington, near London. The Wesley genealogy may be easily traced by means of the following *outline* :—

Samuel Wesley, of Epworth.



In the picture before us, Mrs. and Miss Wesley are the representatives of the Wesley Family, now so nearly extinct. Mrs. Sarah Wesley, the widow of the "poet of Methodism,"

and daughter of Marmaduke Gwynne, Esq., was born October 12th, 1726. Her father, who kept a princely establishment, having twenty servants and a chaplain, was highly respected by his tenantry and neighbours. Under the preaching of Howell Harris he was savingly converted to God. Mr. Gwynne, and his daughter Sarah, actively engaged themselves in efforts of Christian usefulness; and rejoiced greatly at witnessing the spread of religion around them. Upon Miss Gwynne's marriage she cheerfully withdrew from the associations and comforts of her earlier life, and devoted herself to the interests of one of the best and kindest of husbands; willingly committing herself to a life and cause not unfrequently marked by peril and suffering. A few months after their marriage, Mr. Charles Wesley engaged a small house in Bristol, as a home for his wife,—“such a one,” he says, “as suited a stranger and pilgrim upon earth.” Subsequently Mrs. Wesley removed to London, where, at a very advanced age, she died in peace.

Miss Sarah Wesley, daughter of the Rev. Charles and Mrs. Wesley, was born in Bristol, April 2nd, 1759, and died September 19th, 1828. This estimable lady,—well remembered and esteemed by many persons now living for her polite and Christian deportment,—possessed no small share of the family intelligence. Her poetic powers, early developed, were creditable. She was never married, but in the later period of a lengthened life, generally resided with her brother Charles, the musician, whose eccentric, and careless, though withal amiable and moral life, required the vigilant and abiding attention of his sister to order aright.

THE CLERGY.

The Rev. Peard Dickinson, and the Rev. James Creighton, may be taken to represent the clergy of the established church; a class of persons to whom John Wesley always paid most sincere and respectful attention. Although the earnest endeavour made by Wesley to promote a better state of feeling amongst the evangelical clergy, and a more effective and practical union for the spread of vital godliness through-

out the land, signally failed ;* yet a few clergymen considered themselves honoured with his friendship, and strove after the measure of their ability to co-operate with him.

During the lifetime of John Wesley, the revival of religion, under the form of Wesleyan Methodism, was mostly carried on in this country by means of the lay-preachers,—yet the ecclesiastical views of the Wesleys, and the early Metropolitan Methodists, rendered it necessary that at the *head-quarters* of the United Societies, divine worship should be conducted as nearly as possible in accordance with the order of things that prevailed in the established church. For a considerable period therefore the regular public services at the City Road Chapel, London, particularly the reading of the liturgy, and the administration of the sacraments, were attended to by clergymen, episcopally ordained. At the time of Wesley's decease, the Rev. Peard Dickinson and the Rev. James Creighton officiated here in this capacity.

* In the year 1761, Wesley says, in a communication to a clergyman, "God has enabled me to stand almost alone for these twenty years." At the same time he remarks, "How desirable is it that there should be the most open avowed intercourse between the few clergymen in England who preach the three grand scriptural doctrines; original sin, justification by faith, and holiness consequent thereon." About this same time he wrote a letter to promote a fuller expression of this union. The letter favourably commends the Christian conduct of several ministers of the church of England—thirty-three being named; existing difficulties in the way of the extension of the work of God are noted; any attempt at too strict a conformity of "opinions," or "expressions," or "outward order," is guarded against; and then a strong and earnest plea is urged in favour of such an union of affection, sympathy, and mutual respect as would advance both their holiness and happiness. Two years and a half later, (April, 1764,) this letter, with a short explanatory note, was sent to a number of clergymen. The result is described in an "Address to the Travelling Preachers," dated August 4, 1769. "Out of fifty or sixty to whom I wrote, only three vouchsafed me an answer. So I give this up: I can do no more. They are a rope of sand; and such they will continue. But it is otherwise with the travelling preachers in our Connexion. You are at present one body," and so forth. See Wesley's Works, (third edition,) vol. xii. p. 248; iii. pp. 168—174; xiii. p. 209.

Both these clergymen were highly respected for their Christian consistency and godly conversation. Mr. Dickinson was born in the year 1758; and about the age of sixteen was soundly converted to God. At Oxford he successfully pursued his studies, and attained the degree of M.A. At the commencement of his ministerial life he served as curate to Mr. Perronet, at Shoreham; whose grand-daughter he afterwards married. From Shoreham he was invited to London by John Wesley, who spoke of him as "a very pious and sensible young man." On the 15th of May, 1802, in a holy triumph, he passed away to his eternal rest, in the forty-fourth year of his age.

James Creighton was born at Moyne-Hall, near Cavan, in Ireland, in the year 1739. His early instructions were received from his mother, who impressed upon his mind religious truth, and strongly enforced the careful and diligent reading of the scriptures. Marked success attended his studies at school, and he was subsequently sent to Trinity College, Dublin, where in the year 1764, he was admitted to the degree of Bachelor of Arts. In October, 1765, he was ordained priest, and appointed curate in the Cathedral church, under the Bishop of Kilmore; whose first counsel to his curate—to "say nothing at all about *faith* in his sermons,"—was by no means calculated to advance his holiness or promote his success. At this time Mr. Creighton, though outwardly correct in his behaviour, was a stranger to the nature and power of true godliness; becoming however acquainted with some of the writings of Wesley and Mr. Fletcher, he was gradually led to see the necessity of being born again.

After several months of earnest prayer to Almighty God, he was enabled to believe to the saving of his soul, and secured the power of a holy and obedient life. Mr. Creighton immediately commenced a new Christian course, which, though censured by some of his friends as utterly "irregular," soon evinced,—by his earnest and faithful appeals from the pulpit, and his extra exertion and open-air preaching,—the character and force of the change that had taken place

in him. Without any separation from his own church, he frequently associated with the Methodists in the surrounding neighbourhood, and assisted them at their different society meetings. In the year 1783, he was invited by John Wesley to join him in London, whither he shortly afterwards went, and was appointed to officiate as one of the resident clergymen at the City Road Chapel. Mr. Creighton's godly deportment was unimpeachable; and he has the reputation of a scholar, whose knowledge of the classics and oriental literature was highly respectable. He died in the year 1820, in the eighty-third year of his age.

THE METHODIST PREACHERS.

Another class of persons, intimately and inseparably associated with John Wesley and Methodism, embraces the Methodist preachers, the lay preachers, the assistants, as they were variously designated. In the scene before us a faithful representation of this class is given by such men as Joseph Bradford, James Rogers and others.

Could the precise day in the year 1740 be ascertained, when the first sermon by the first lay-preacher in Methodism was delivered, it ought evermore to be noted as a *red-letter day* in the Methodist kalendar. Joseph Humphrys is indeed mentioned by John Wesley, as the name of the first lay-preacher that assisted him in England, even as early as the year 1738. This person's course afterwards became eccentric and unfaithful. John Cennick might also be named as standing in a somewhat initial sense at the head of the lay-preachers of Methodism. He became acquainted with the "Methodists" at Oxford in 1739; and in June, of the same year, began to expound and preach to the colliers at Kingswood, and occasionally to the societies in Bristol, encouraged and sustained by John Wesley. Cennick, however, was regarded by Wesley with favour, chiefly as a godly young man willing to assist him at his new school at Kingswood; and any other service rendered by him was accidental. Besides, in *June*, 1739, *Wesleyan* Methodism did not exist. In fact the United

Societies had been in existence some twelve months, and its members were rapidly on the increase, before the *urgency* of Wesley's mission became apparent, and its peculiar development more clearly interpreted by the providence of God.

John Wesley having been called away from London, soon heard that one of the pious men left by him at the Foundry to "pray with the society," had begun to preach also; he returned in all haste, full of high views of church order, and strongly bent upon at once putting a stop to so irreverent an irregularity. His more calm and observant mother met him at the threshold; and seeing his agitation, and suspecting his high purpose, she said to her indignant son, "Take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are!" John Wesley, thus admonished, heard *Thomas Maxfield* for himself; and immediately and readily gave expression to one of the strongest ruling principles of his eventful life—he cheerfully submitted to the will of God, even though that will wrought in a way directly opposed to his own strong purpose and prejudice. This event became a key to an "*expedient*" as John Wesley calls it, and to which he admits, he was of necessity driven, by the refusal of clergymen to assist him in taking the spiritual charge of his converts. Sinners by hundreds and by thousands were turned from "a course of sin to a course of holiness." The persons that effected this reformation were frequently spoken of by the clergy as satanic; and the new converts were watched over by parochial ministers "even as a leopard watcheth over his prey." In this "extreme necessity" John Wesley, at first with hesitation and great caution, but with a recognition of a divine guidance, accepted the only adequate help within his reach—that of *lay-preaching*. Highly valued and efficient as this was, it was nevertheless placed under the strictest limitations and guards. No religious services were allowed to be held during church-hours, or sacraments administered, by the lay-preachers. And not until additional and irresistible providences had declared, at a far later period in the history of Methodism, the divine call which these men had received to the work of the ministry,

was the full service of the sanctuary allotted them—or their rightful ministerial status recognised.

And the same providence that suggested to Wesley, so early in his remarkable career a means of relief and hope, raised him up such a band of able and worthy fellow-labourers as would do honour to any church. They were variously endowed and gifted,—some with plain and earnest zeal,—some with indomitable courage and endurance;—some with extraordinary pulpit powers,—others, though generally self-educated, possessed an amount of scholarship that would have gained them a reputation amongst the learned men of any university;—and the whole enjoyed an unblemished character for godliness, not unfrequently distinguished by instances of high and attractive sanctity. These were men of whom it might be truly said “the world was not worthy;” “out of weakness they were made strong;” many of them “had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings;” and some suffered “bonds and imprisonment;” not a few, in the early days of Methodism, “were stoned,” “being destitute, afflicted, tormented;” but, “having obtained a good report through faith,” these honoured men faithfully fulfilled their day of labour, and were gathered home to God, entailing upon the Wesleyanism of the present day an inheritance of the highest value and power. The MINISTRY OF METHODISM may well be proud of its apostolic succession—a succession derived from a band of men marked by as much of *apostolic character, doctrine and service* as the world was ever blessed with, or the Church of Christ ever possessed! We take such men as Bradford, Broadbent, Rankin, and Rogers as fair specimen cases or representatives of these early Methodist preachers.

JOSEPH BRADFORD.

Of Joseph Bradford's early life few particulars are known. He was born at Blandford, in Dorsetshire; and in the year 1770 was received as a Methodist preacher, and thenceforth became, till the period of John Wesley's decease, his favoured and faithful friend and travelling companion. Subsequently Mr. Bradford was appointed governor of the Kingswood

school. Such was the confidence placed in him by the Methodist preachers of his own day, that in the year 1795—a year of connexional strife and great danger—he was elected president of the Conference. Eight years later he was a second time chosen to fill the same office. After seven years' residence at Kingswood school as governor, he entered again upon the itinerant work, and successively travelled at Bristol, Plymouth-Dock, Macclesfield and Hull, at which latter place he died suddenly, under a painful mental visitation, on the 28th of May, 1808.

John Wesley marked his respect for Mr. Bradford by appointing him one of the eight Methodist preachers who were to preach in the New-Chapel, at London,—and the affectionate regard he felt for him was further shown by the bequeathment to him, *by will*, of his own watch.*

Joseph Bradford was possessed of great physical strength, was distinguished by a well regulated and disciplined life, and, as stated in the official record of his death, was “highly respected for eminent uprightness and inflexible integrity.”

JAMES ROGERS.

James Rogers is another specimen of the same class of Methodist preachers, and is prominently pictured out by the artist, in the centre of the attendant group. Although possessed of considerable interest, sacred to Methodists, as enshrined in the reputation that belongs to his sainted wife, yet, James Rogers, in his own name and character, stands out in Methodist history as no ordinary man.

He was born at Marsk, a village in the north-riding of

* Some years since my father purchased this watch of a descendant of Joseph Bradford, and presented it to my now sainted sister. I recollect it as a large watch, in a silver case, having a strong alarm bell attached, which was many a time set ringing to tell some interested listener the means by which in olden times John Wesley was “called up,” *very* early “called up” to renew his “work and labour of love.” Upon my beloved sister’s marriage to the Rev. William Peterson, it passed into his possession, where it is still retained as a valued and sacred relic.

Yorkshire, in February, 1749. In childhood he was thoughtful and serious, and at the age of fourteen he joined the Methodist society. In February, 1769, he received a clear and striking view of Christ crucified, and was made unspeakably happy under a sense of the pardon of his sins. Not long afterwards he was made a partaker of that more matured holiness, which throughout his life so eminently distinguished his character and ministry. "My love to God," Mr. Rogers says, in speaking of what followed his conversion, "was accompanied with fervent desires for the salvation of immortal souls, and a conviction that I was called of God to preach the gospel." His first care was for the salvation of his own relations; and having walked a considerable distance to his native place, he collected a number of friends into his father's house, and there and then, standing up for the first time as a preacher of the gospel, he faithfully entreated them to repent and be converted. Shortly afterwards, moved of God, but apart from all church arrangement and system, James Rogers enlarged the sphere of his usefulness. "The holy flame" he says, "was such in my heart, that I went to the neighbouring villages, and, especially every Lord's day, stood in the open streets to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come." A year or two later he set out on foot upon a journey of about one hundred miles in circumference, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ wherever he found a door open. During these early manifestations of a divine power, and no less certain proofs of a call of God to preach the gospel, he suffered much from cruel persecution, and bodily infirmities. In the year 1772 John Wesley wrote to Mr. Rogers to go to York, and supply the place of the preacher, who had just departed for America. Three years later he was received into full connexion, and subsequently travelled in Edinburgh, Cornwall, part of Yorkshire, and Dublin—in which last circuit the society was increased by the addition of about six hundred members whilst Mr. Rogers was stationed there. From Dublin he was removed to Cork, and thence to London in 1790, where he became a privileged associate of John Wesley in his last days. After a few more years spent in the itinerant

work, compelled by affliction and infirmities, he withdrew from public service and retired to Guisborough, in the north-riding of Yorkshire, where he ended his life of extended usefulness and most exemplary piety, on the 28th of January 1807, in the fifty-eighth year of his age.

THE ARISTOCRACY OF METHODISM.

Methodism is said to be a mission to the masses ; and its ministrations have been favourably regarded, because specially suited to meet the necessities of the ignorant and wretched. There may be a glory in all this, which it is well to prize and covet. But if it be implied that because Methodism successfully addressed the many thousands of Kennington Common and Moorfields, and because it tamed down the untutored and brutal colliers of Kingswood and Newcastle, it had little, if any, influence in the rural districts, and with the village population, of this land ; or that it exercised no power over educated and refined people ; then the first statement must be declared as most one-sided and illusive. In instances, by no means few, far away from the bustle and excitement of a crowded town, or a large society, Methodism quietly worked its way into the neglected hamlet, and frequently found access to the more thoughtful and intelligent home of some respectable farmer, or the seat of a country gentleman : and in these places Methodism achieved some of its most grateful triumphs.

The fact is, John Wesley was a scholar and a gentleman in the highest sense ; by education and instinct he was greatly in advance of his times ; and in any company his good breeding, and correct manners, and well-stored mind, obtained him respect ; and in later years, as the purposes of goodness unfolded themselves, secured him the affection and homage of many persons in high rank and power. Under the influence of Wesley's *personal character*, and as the result of the power of those principles of integrity and goodness that swayed himself, there arose in Methodism a class of persons, fitly and fairly entitled to be called its *aristocracy*. Method-

ism, indeed, made the sober, temperate—the idle, industrious—and the careless, thoughtful and intelligent; and raised thousands from degradation to a respectable social state, and not a few from poverty to wealth. It is not, however, to this class of persons that reference is now made, but to men who, whilst possessed of affluence and elevated station, were won over to a hearty and high-principled attachment to John Wesley and his evangelical system. What, for instance, but the gentlemanly bearing of the Wesleys, and the manifest goodness of their cause, could have gained them the respect and confidence of the Gwynne family, and led both father and mother to agree most cordially to the marriage of their daughter with Charles Wesley?

In the roll of this Methodist aristocracy a lengthened enumeration of honoured names might be given.

These respected individuals exercised, in their own immediate neighbourhood, the happiest possible influence; and occasionally, in distant parts of the country, encouraged by their presence and support many a persecuted and enfeebled society. The biographical records respecting these honoured men are unhappily brief; but the last race of Methodist preachers,—the race that knew John Wesley, and preached and travelled in his day, the lingering and venerable remnants of which are just passing away,—have handed down to us a tradition of the leading men of their day, and of the times before them, of intense and lasting interest. Though dwelling in the midst of comforts created by wealth and cultivated taste, they are represented as feeling perfectly at home in the village chapel, or at the country prayer meetings; though frequently called to mix, officially and otherwise, with the gentry of their immediate neighbourhood, they were no strangers to the pious poor of their own society, but treated them with unaffected condescension and kindness; though distinguished by a dignity which could not be mistaken or disguised, they were not proud or distant; and often it has been declared, that when it came to the circuit preacher's turn to find his way to the mansion of the man thus favoured by the providence of God, at no other place

in the circuit was he received with more kindness or warmth, or with greater courtesy and respect.

At the death-bed of Wesley, Robert Carr Brackenbury, Esq.,* together with Dr. Whitehead and John Horton, Esq., represent a class of persons we venture to call the ancient aristocracy of Methodism.

Dr. Whitehead is well known as the personal friend, and physician, as also one of the executors and biographers of Wesley.

JOHN HORTON, ESQ.

John Horton, Esq., was a merchant of London, and one of the Common Council in the city. He was probably brought to a knowledge of the truth somewhat early in life ; and became the very intimate friend of John and Charles Wesley,—the former of whom appointed him one of the executors of his will. A great admirer of the Methodist system, he was at the same time a lover of all good men ; and whilst giving his preference to the services of the Wesleyan society, he gladly united with other Christian people in their means of grace. He would have made a good specimen member of the modern Evangelical Union ! In the later period of his life, Mr. Horton experienced some severe and adverse visitations,—a discipline which he endured with an intelligent and cheerful piety. Near the close of the last century he took up his residence in the city of Bristol, where, in the year 1803, he died in great peace.

ROBERT CARR BRACKENBURY, ESQ.

Of Robert Carr Brackenbury it may be said, that he was "unknown, and yet well known." Few more familiar names have been handed down to the present day,—and yet few of

* Although Mr. Brackenbury had a name and a place amongst the Methodist preachers for more than thirty years, and was officially recognised by the preachers of his own day as a "dear brother ;" yet the "*Squire*" can scarcely be taken as a specimen of the class we last noted, whilst he naturally, we think (without intending the arrangement as an affront), falls into the order we now describe.

the worthies of early Methodism have had less recorded of them. On his dying bed Mr. Brackenbury laid an injunction upon his attendants and friends, that nothing should be said or published respecting him after his decease. This is not the place to raise an enquiry, in regard to the propriety or duty of a too strict adherence to that which affection designates as the sacred injunction of the dead; nor to balance between the wishes of departed saints, and the strong and equitable claims of living ones. Besides, in the consideration of such a subject, a previous question has to be determined,—even the *rights* of Him whose gifts are distributed to be improved; and who requires that the light He imparts should shine to His own glory, as well as to our advantage. However in the present instance discussions and regrets come too late; and all that can now be done, without any attempt at eulogy, or “human panegyric,” is to gather up, and briefly record the few reminiscences and facts that remain.

Robert Carr Brackenbury was born at Panton House, near Wragby, Lincolnshire, in the year 1752,—and as eldest son, succeeded to the family estates of his father, Carr Brackenbury, Esq. He matriculated at Catherine Hall, Cambridge. Whilst pursuing his studies at college he was convinced of sin, and shortly afterwards converted to God. Some time subsequently he visited Hull, and, after a long and close conversation with one of the circuit preachers stationed there, was led to see it his duty to join the Methodists. A few of the peculiarities of the Wesleyan system—more especially the irregularity apparent in the employment of lay-preachers, created at the first much surprise and difficulty. An earnest and deeply serious search into this matter, however, resulted, not only in a cordial approval of the Methodist system, but, in a recognition of a divine call to himself to preach the gospel after the same plan. In the exercise of this duty God remarkably blessed the labours of his servant, and made the service itself a means of great good to his own soul.

Early in his more public religious course Mr. Brackenbury occasionally accompanied John Wesley on some of his pastoral tours; and both by his preaching, and the exercise, in his own

immediate neighbourhood, of his personal influence as a magistrate, greatly furthered the cause of God.

In the year 1779 Mr. Brackenbury built a little chapel, adjoining his Hall, at Raithby, which he was then completing. This spot remained one of special and sacred interest to Methodist preachers for two or three generations.

Throughout life Mr. Brackenbury's health appears to have been but feeble ; and he not unfrequently sought, in a southern clime, a residence conducive to his physical comfort and improvement : but wherever he sojourned he failed not to attend to the one great and prominent business of his life. Shortly after the erection of the Methodist chapel at Raithby, Mr. Brackenbury arranged to spend the winter in London. John Wesley delighted therewith, gave him a hearty welcome to metropolitan Methodism : "Go to my house," he writes to him from Bristol, "what is mine is yours : you are my brother, my friend : let neither life nor death divide us."

A year or two later Mr. Brackenbury removed to one of the Channel Islands ; where he occupied, for several years, an important and influential religious and social position. Prior to this event, Mr. Brackenbury's qualification and call to preach the gospel had been formally recognised by John Wesley ; although it does not appear that he was enrolled amongst the number of the Methodist preachers in the ordinary way, by being first placed for a year or two on trial,—or was subject to the full discipline of the body, by being periodically transferred from one circuit to another. Nevertheless John Wesley's own judgment and authority were fully exercised in giving him a name and a place amongst the Methodist preachers—a relationship which was carefully retained from the year 1784 to the close of life. On the 9th of March, 1782, John Wesley wrote to Mr. Brackenbury as follows—"It is exceedingly clear to me—First that a dispensation of the gospel is committed to you ; and, secondly, that you are peculiarly called to publish it in connection with us. It has pleased God to give us so many and so strong evidences of this, that I see not how any reasonable person can doubt it. Therefore what I have often said before, I say again, and

give it under my hand that you are welcome to preach in any of our preaching-houses, in Great Britain or Ireland, whenever it is convenient for you." This statement may be fairly taken as containing Mr. Brackenbury's commission, or ordination to the full work of a Methodist preacher as, at that time, understood.

Upon Mr. Brackenbury's arrival at Jersey he was cordially welcomed by a few pious soldiers stationed there, and a very small company of godly persons. Strange notions and prejudices respecting John Wesley and his preachers had been spread amongst them, which a few explanations removed ; and they then readily conformed to the rules, and a Methodist society was at once commenced. Public religious services were, however, attended with considerable difficulty and persecution. Sometimes when Mr. Brackenbury preached gunpowder and fire were thrown amongst the people, the windows were broken, and so much noise and tumult made, that the congregations were scattered. After a few months' patient and faithful endurance of these trials God interposed for the relief of His servants, and not only turned aside the wrath of man, but secured them the good will and support of persons in the island of considerable influence and power.

Although Mr. Brackenbury took up his residence in Jersey in 1782, and commenced at once the work of a Methodist preacher, it was not till the year 1784 that *Jersey*, with Robert Carr Brackenbury's name appended to it, appears upon the Minutes of Conference,—without however the usual prefixed *number* that distinguishes each Methodist circuit. The fact is Mr. Brackenbury as a gentleman of fortune, provided his own house, (at St. Heliers,) and in other financial respects was independant of "circuit support." The state of Methodism therefore, in the Channel Isles, was at its commencement in some respects peculiar. In 1785 no entry of Jersey, or of Mr. Brackenbury's name, is to be found in the Minutes. In the following year however, Jersey reappears, and this time, with a proper circuit number ;—the preachers appointed being Robert Carr Brackenbury and Adam Clarke. Mr. Brackenbury's name stands for the Channel Isles down

to the year 1789, when he returned to his native county, and was "put down" for Gainsborough, as a supernumerary.

At the close of the year 1790, shortly after Mr. Brackenbury's removal from Jersey, he received an invitation from John Wesley to spend a little time with him in London. "If you choose to lodge at my house," he says, "I have a room at your service : and we have a family which I can recommend to all England as adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour." Whether this invitation was accepted is not known ; but in less than three months, when John Wesley breathed his last, Mr. Brackenbury was at the bed-side of his venerable friend.

In the year 1792 Mr. Brackenbury removed again to the south of England, and for three or four years made the island of Portland his place of residence ; fixing upon Sarum, the nearest Methodist circuit, as the one to which the Conference could station him as a supernumerary. Here,—as also in the Channel Isles,—Methodism was not only greatly indebted to Mr. Brackenbury for his labours as a preacher of the gospel, but his liberality and influence secured to the society a chapel and preachers' house and premises.

To Raithby Hall, at the close of this sojourn at Portland, Mr. Brackenbury finally returned, in 1796, and resided at his own mansion to the end of life ; appearing, during this period of near a quarter of a century, upon the Minutes of Conference as a supernumary preacher, at Blandford, then at Horncastle, and lastly at Spilsby.

Mr. Brackenbury's intercourse with John Wesley in early life,—his *companionship*, it might almost be called,—was sustained to the very close of Wesley's career. He was visited by Wesley on the Channel Islands,—and two or three times accompanied him to Holland. On the occasion of these visits, Wesley's sermons were frequently interpreted by his friend, sentence by sentence, for the advantage of the French hearers ; and at the close of the religious services, Wesley prayed in English and his companion in French.

Although Mr. Brackenbury was a gentleman of education, and in the Commission of the Peace, and, being possessed of

a very ample fortune, had the means at his disposal of forwarding the cause he had embraced, yet Wesley's strong and marked affection for his friend arose not out of these things. "*You love and recommend our discipline,*" Wesley says to him : this of itself would secure his esteem and confidence. In Edinburgh "Mr. Brackenbury preached," John Wesley says, "*the old Methodist doctrine:*" this, too, would win the heart of the man who regarded himself and his assistants as raised up of God to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land. And in writing to Mr. Brackenbury within six months of his own decease, Wesley approvingly notes his friend's sympathy with himself on the subject of "*full salvation.*" "This doctrine," he says, "is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists ;— I congratulate you upon sitting loose to all below ; and steadfast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free."

In the early part of his Christian course,—as well as when engaged in the introduction of Methodism into the Channel Islands,—he was called to endure severe trial and persecution ; which he faithfully and firmly bore for the Master's sake. Zealous in service, generous in spirit, laborious according to his health and strength, kind to all with whom he associated, Mr. Brackenbury accomplished the great purposes of his stewardship, and secured to himself the respect and affection of a large class of godly people. An early riser, of industrious habits, and a diligent student of sacred scripture, he failed not to turn to good account the comparative leisure he enjoyed at Raithby Hall. We find, therefore, that in the year 1800 he printed at the Methodist press, and sold through George Whitfield, a volume of sacred poetry, containing near six hundred pages, entitled, "*Sacred Poetry ; or Hymns on the principal Histories of the Old and New Testament,—and on all the Parables contained in the latter.*" The preface to this volume speaks of the work itself as "chiefly a collection from other works of a similar nature." It must, however, have contained a large portion of original poetry, carefully composed and arranged,—as even Mr. Brackenbury's modesty allowed him to admit, that, "in the course of the work will

be found a considerable number of new hymns on various subjects, never before published. He also sent to the press a tract, entitled, "*The great things of Religion made plain by their primary evidences and demonstrations. By Robert Fleming, author of 'The Fulfilling of the Prophecies.'* Republished, with numerous alterations, by R. C. Brackenbury. 1812." 54 p.p.

Mr. Brackenbury died, without issue, at his seat, Raithby Hall, on the 11th of August, 1818, aged sixty-six, leaving a widow, who survived him twenty-nine years. The Wesleyan ministers at the ensuing Conference, whilst excusing themselves for not giving a fuller biographical notice of their friend and brother, because "he solemnly expressed his wish, that his name might not be made the subject of human panegyric," add, "After having adorned and successfully preached the gospel amongst us for upwards of forty years, the close of our dear brother's earthly career was in perfect unison with the undeviating tenour of his life,—the setting of a refulgent sun in a calm, clear, evening sky, with the certainty of rising again in everlasting splendour." And his friend, the poet James Montgomery, composed the following single stanza, that constitutes the substance of Mr. Brackenbury's epitath; and which, whilst beautifully descriptive of his dying injunction, is strikingly suggestive of the leading principle of his life:—

" 'Silent be human praise,
The solemn charge was thine
Which widow'd love obeys,
And on thy lowly shrine
Inscribes the monumental stone,
With, 'Glory be to God alone!'"

THE ELECT LADIES.

The *elect ladies* constitute the only remaining class of persons to be now noted as represented at the death-bed of Wesley.

Successful as John Wesley was in securing the approval, and occasionally the services, of some of the leading *men* of

his day,—equally, and perhaps more extensively, successful was he in obtaining the Christian regard and respectful confidence of a number of pre-eminently godly ladies. The transparency of his character, the purity of his motives, and perhaps the extraordinary authority he exercised in the government of his society, (which, in the instance in hand, might *naturally* create a ready and respectful homage,) combined in calling forth, as “labourers with him in the gospel,” a considerable number of Christian ladies, possessed of the highest spiritual qualification and moral power. In their godly judgment and effective co-operation, Wesley placed the fullest reliance and hope : and the history, especially of early Methodism, shows in how many instances this confidence was neither misplaced nor abused. To the mother of John Wesley,—his first theological tutor, and, to *her latest hour*, his most respected and best teacher, he owed a debt of everlasting gratitude ;—and to the piety and influence of the same class of persons at a later period of life, he was largely indebted. Some of the noblest instances of courage, when danger ran highest ; of perseverance, when not a few grew weary ; of faithfulness, when many were given to change ; and of a firm and loyal attachment to Wesley’s fondest preference and strictest peculiarities ; were to be found amongst those Christian ladies who were his favoured correspondents and friends. These were “women professing godliness,” the beautiful simplicity of whose outward adorning might be taken as a faint, yet truthful, type of the purity and uncommon sanctity of their hearts and lives.

Amongst these *celebrities* of early Methodism, few names stand out with a greater prominence and charm than the names of *Hester Ann Rogers* and *Elizabeth Ritchie* ; and so long as a reputation derived from pure and elevated piety, with consecration to the service of Christ, shall give a title to an enduring remembrance, so long will the memory of these estimable and sainted ladies be embalmed in the grateful esteem of the Methodist societies : and it may be added, that the invaluable “*Experience and Spiritual Letters*” of Hester Ann Rogers, and the beautiful memoirs of Mrs. Elizabeth

Mortimer (formerly Ritchie), ought to be estimated as of surpassing influence and power, so long as female character has to be formed upon a Christian model, and its religious usefulness encouraged and sustained.

MISS ELIZABETH RITCHIE.

Elizabeth Ritchie, or, as better known through her memoirs, Mrs. Elizabeth Mortimer, was the daughter of a medical gentleman, who resided at Otley, in the beautiful valley of Wharfedale, Yorkshire, where she was born on the 2nd of February, 1754. The advantages of an early religious training were well nigh lost, when she was committed, at the tender age of twelve, to the patronage of an elderly lady of wealth and high station, who familiarised her young friend to worldly company and vain pleasures. A visit, however, to her father's house, at the age of sixteen, and a favoured interview with John Wesley, about the same time, led to a serious and deliberative enquiry respecting her religious state. After a brief, though severe and painful struggle, her choice was made : she exchanged the friendship of the world for the reproach of Christ ; and by a ready and earnest decision in favour of a godly life, removed the barriers that prevented her approach to God. The manner in which she realised a clear and happy sense of the divine favour, shortly afterwards, is thus described by her own pen. "On one occasion," Miss Ritchie says, "my soul being greatly athirst for God, I poured out my supplication before him, and he helped me to plead in a special manner the promises made to penitent sinners. I received divine power to make them my own ; and felt assured that he who knew no sin was made a sin-offering for me that I ' might be made the righteousness of God in him.' From that happy moment, peace, love and joy in the Holy Ghost flowed into my soul." Then, "having tasted," as her biographer says, "the living water in its crystal freshness, she thirsted not for earth's less limpid streams." From the very first start in her Christian course she kept the high prize of her calling in view, and was enabled

early in her religious experience to attain to a maturity of grace, enjoyed only by those who seek the Lord with all their hearts.

True to the instinct and power of this new life, Miss Ritchie soon began to express her sympathy with Christ in the hallowed purposes of his love; and to indicate, by her care to excel in good works, the character that so signalized her future career. Afflicted relatives were counselled and prayed with; careless friends were affectionately admonished; a class of young people was committed to her charge; and Christian associates, of a mature age and experience, gladly welcomed her as a helper in their social worship.

Few young people have been called to make greater sacrifices in early life than Miss Ritchie. An open way into a gay world she resolutely shunned, when she entered John Wesley's preaching-room in the quiet little town of Otley; and many a kind companion and rich friend she was obliged to forego when she united herself to the despised people called Methodists. Seldom, however, has the Saviour's promise of a hundred-fold reward, even in this world, to those who forsake earthly good for His name sake, been more graciously and truly fulfilled than in her case. A few friends, the tenure of whose favours was at the best uncertain and short, were given up; but rarely has one person been more highly respected, or admitted into a larger circle of honoured intercourse, and abiding friendship, than she.

At the commencement of her Christian life she endured much personal suffering and weakness, which brought her more than once, nigh unto death. This affliction was not only sanctified to her spiritual advantage; but it called forth the marked sympathy and attention of John Wesley and several very eminent christians,—fellowship, and correspondence with whom, constituted for many years a privileged means of getting and of doing good.

In the autumn of 1790 she accepted an invitation from John Wesley to reside at the Chapel house, City Road, London. Here, with a vigilant and filial affection, she waited upon her aged and now enfeebled and revered friend. She

was eyes to the blind ; rising with pleasure at half-past five o'clock every morning, that she might read to John Wesley from six o'clock till breakfast time. With the most intelligent carefulness she noted down the indications of Wesley's approaching end ; his last sayings she sacredly treasured up ; and the closing scene faithfully narrated, at some length, in a paper which was printed and largely circulated throughout the connexion. If for no other service, yet for this one alone, the name of Elizabeth Ritchie deserves to be commended to future generations as a name to be held in lasting and grateful esteem !

Miss Ritchie was "*remembered*" by John Wesley in his will. It would have been a little thing had he expressed his regard for his friend by placing in her hand his "gold seal" prior to his death : such a gift would have been a small token of affection, valuable chiefly because of its original possessor, and the hand that presented it. When, however, Wesley, in his last will and testament, formally and legally secured to Miss Ritchie this gift, it became a legacy more valuable than gold, and more abiding than lands, for it enshrined her name, as associated with Wesley's affection and respect, in a document that shall be known and quoted long as the sun and moon endure.

After a few more years, spent in a course of diligent and earnest usefulness, Elizabeth Ritchie, in November, 1801, was married to Harvey Walklake Mortimer, Esq., and took up her residence in London. In this new and responsible position, the advantage of her early training was at once discovered, and the character and habits already so richly formed received a ready reward. Without neglect of the claims of the church upon her peculiar fitness for service, or any disregard of certain public duties to which she had been so long devoted, she consecrated herself with cheerful and intelligent zeal to the promotion of the welfare of a young family committed to her charge. The happiness secured by this domestic union, which lasted for a term of near nineteen years, was at length painfully terminated by the sudden death of Mr. Mortimer, on the 22nd of March, 1819.

According to the testimony of his afflicted widow, Mr. Mortimer "was a man of prayer, his Bible was his support, and God his refuge."

Left with ample means at her disposal for the relief of the poor, and with time and opportunity for doing good, Mrs. Mortimer spent the greater portion of the further sixteen years she sojourned on earth, in a manner perfectly in harmony with her earlier, but more active and useful life. Gradually, however, as she approached the close of her pilgrimage, and the verge of a term of eighty years, she yielded to the feebleness of old age. Calm in the recollection of a well-spent and happy life, firm in her reliance on the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, ready in her submission to the will of God, and full of hope and joy whilst, in her hours of comparative solitude, she anticipated her reunion with departed saints,—she peacefully waited till her change should come; and then, on the 9th of April, 1835, fell into a tranquil sleep, and without fear, and apparently without pain, she breathed her last. She was interred in the burial ground of City Road Chapel, London, and her death was improved by a funeral sermon preached by Dr. Bunting.

MRS. HESTER ANN ROGERS.

The other Christian lady, of the class just noted, is Hester Ann Rogers,—a name that possesses, as inseparably associated with her "*Experience and Christian Letters*," a freshness and fragrance in the highest degree acceptable.

Mrs. Rogers, whose maiden name was Roe, was descended from a clergyman of the Church of England,—a man who feared the Lord, and brought up his family with a strict regard for religious duties. She was born at Macclesfield, in Cheshire, on the 31st of January, 1756. Shortly after the death of her father, in the ninth year of her age, she became ensnared in many worldly follies; and for a time was committed to a course of fashion and pleasure that greatly imperilled her soul. Under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Simpson, she became powerfully convinced of her sin and danger. From her own mother, who appears to have been

utterly ignorant of the nature of true religion, she received the sternest and most unnatural opposition,—an opposition which was cruelly sustained by her godmother, a lady of large fortune, and from whose favour high worldly advantages were expected. The decision of character, however, that marked her more matured life, gave strong promise of its power, even in its early dawn. Her difficulties and dangers were extraordinary, and the remedy was urgent. After a visitation of the Spirit of God that greatly moved her, she says, “I slept not that night, but rose early next morning, and, without telling my mother, took all my finery, high dressed caps, &c., &c., and ripped them all up; so that I could wear them no more. I then cut my hair short, that it might not be in my own power to have it dressed; and in the most solemn manner vowed never to dance again.” Such purpose of heart to give up all for Christ, was not without its appropriate fruit. Earnest in her convictions of sin, and clear in her views of what she needed to render her secure and happy, she diligently and zealously waited on God for the salvation of her soul. A tract, entitled, “*The great duty of believing on the Son of God,*” having being put into her hands, brought her to that personal faith in the atonement, that determined the crisis of her religious character and life. After a severe conflict, in which she represents herself as alternately cheered by the promises, and impelled by the necessities of her case to come to Christ, she describes the closing scene,—the triumph of her faith, in her own peculiar style. “Lord Jesus,” she says, “I will, I do believe: I now venture my whole salvation upon thee as God: I put my guilty soul into thy hands, thy blood is sufficient. I cast my soul upon thee for time and eternity.” “In that moment,” she adds, “my fetters were broken, my bands were loosed, and my soul set at liberty. The love of God was shed abroad in my heart, and I rejoiced with joy unspeakable.”

This was at the close of the year 1774. The Christian experience of Miss Roe from that time progressively and rapidly matured. The prominence given to the doctrine of entire sanctification, by the Methodist preacher then stationed

at Macclesfield, and the information afforded by Mr. Fletcher's writings, and especially John Wesley's "*Plain Account*," and "*Further Thoughts on Christian Perfection*," greatly edified and quickened her. With a thoroughly Wesleyan view of the distinctiveness of this blessing, and of the mode of its attainment by faith in Christ, she set to work with an earnest determination not to rest in sins forgiven, nor to cease her cry to God for help, till she had obtained a full salvation. On the 22nd of February, 1776, she pleaded long and earnestly for the possession of the perfect love of God. In hallowed and confiding communion with God, through Christ, she fervently pressed home her plea; full of hope in the promise and power of God, she ventured her soul upon the divine faithfulness and love; and in that moment realised a state of grace which she thus records:—"My soul," she says, "is delivered of her burden. I am emptied of all; I am at thy feet, a helpless, worthless worm: but I take hold on thee as my fulness! Everything that I want, thou art. Thou art wisdom, strength, love, holiness; yes, and thou art mine! I am conquered and subdued by love. Thy love sinks me into nothing: it overflows my soul. O my Jesus, thou art all in all! in thee I behold and feel all the fulness of the Godhead mine. I am now one with God: the intercourse is open: sin, inbred sin, no longer hinders the close communion; and God is all my own!"

Watchfulness of spirit, and remarkable diligence in Christian service, together with occasional affliction of a serious, but sanctified kind,—all aided her in the maintenance of this divine life, and enabled her to prove, "faithful is he that calleth, who also will do it."

On the 19th of August, 1784, Miss Roe was married to the Rev. James Rogers,—a union every way suited to her ability and tastes,—and one highly promotive of her personal happiness and usefulness. After travelling in Dublin and Cork, at the Conference of 1790 Mr. Rogers was stationed in London, and with his wife and family took up their residence with John Wesley, in the preacher's house, City Road. Here they were privileged to witness the death of their

venerable friend. Mrs. Rogers observes, "The solemnity of the dying hour of that great, good man, I believe, will be ever written on my heart. Well might Dr. Young say :—

'The chamber where the good man meets his fate,
Is privileged beyond the common walk of virtuous life,
Quite on the verge of heaven.'"

From London Mr. and Mrs. Rogers removed to Birmingham, in 1793, where, on the 10th of October, the following year, Mrs. Rogers, after a visitation of much suffering, peacefully fell asleep in Jesus, in the thirty-ninth year of her age. In life Mrs. Rogers was pre-eminently holy and useful ; and being dead, by her "*Spiritual Letters*," and the invaluable records of her own "*Experience*," she yet speaketh.

Suggestions.

In addition to the *representation* of classes, in the group around the death-bed of Wesley, there are two or three points to be noted, which are *suggestive* of particular features, either of the character or work of Wesley.

THE MISSION WORK.

Thomas Rankin, for instance, who stands at the extreme left of the circle of friends, may be fairly taken as suggestive both of John Wesley's own missionary spirit, and of the mission work of Methodism.

Led by various and resistless providences, John Wesley, early in life, overstepped the narrow enclosures into which England's pasture had been subdivided, and nobly said "*the world is my parish*." This characteristic declaration may have been originally intended as a defence, or an apology, of his "irregular" proceedings ; but it must be taken also as an index of his pursuits,—a clear and certain intimation of what would infallibly follow.

Our colonies, then, as now, had often received adventurers, who, as they left the home of their fathers, not unfrequently forsook their fathers' God, and abandoned their profession and faith. In 1766 a cluster of Irish emigrants of this class,

having reached New York, had gathered together in a little cabin to spend the evening at a game of cards. A godly woman, one of another company of emigrants, hearing of this, earnestly protested against their impiety, threw the pack of cards into the fire, and solemnly charged Philip Embury, one of the number, to forsake his backslidings, and to preach to them the word of life. Embury, who in his native land had been a local preacher, trembled under this faithful admonition ; he again sought mercy of the Lord, and shortly afterwards preached the gospel to five persons in his own hired room—probably the first Methodist sermon preached in America ! The seed sown under circumstances so inauspicious soon sprang up. This small and feeble society was in a few months after its formation wondrously cheered and aided by the presence and help of Captain Webb,—an officer in the British army, who upon his conversion to God at Bristol, about twelve months before, had begun to call sinners to repentance. The number of members at New York increased ; a place of worship was erected ; and in the year 1769 the startling, but important statement was made by John Wesley in the English Conference—"We have a pressing call from our brethren at New York (who have built a preaching-house,) to come over and help them." The heart of John Wesley, that showed in 1735 its true instinct and power, by his own personal mission to Georgia, was not likely to rest indifferent when claims from the same general quarter were urged upon its sympathy and Christian love. When therefore the question was put—"Who is willing to go?" tradition says that he supported the question in the most animated and feeling manner. Be that as it may, the answer recorded is remarkable, and highly creditable to the Methodist Conference. Richard Boardman, and Joseph Pilmoor volunteered as the first missionaries ; and as a further token of brotherly love, a missionary collection was at once made by the Methodist preachers present, amounting to the noble sum of £70—£50 being allotted towards the payment of the chapel debt, and £20 given to the brethren for their expenses. In 1771, two years later, the Minutes of Conference

enter—"America 316," the number of members in society, and state "Our brethren in America call aloud for help." Five preachers being willing to go, two—Francis Asbury and Richard Wright, were appointed. Two years later again the number of members in the society had increased to one thousand ; and eight preachers are recorded as the American staff of missionaries, with *Thomas Rankin at their head*. From this time the Methodist Mission spread rapidly in America, and subsequently extended an agency to different parts of the globe ; so that, when Thomas Rankin stood to witness the departure of his venerated father and friend, *one* result of twenty years missionary labour, was seen in a record of more than 46,000 members of society.

THOMAS RANKIN.

Mr. Rankin was of Scotch descent, being born at Dunbar, about the year 1737. In early life his mind was favourably impressed with serious thoughts respecting God, and he was preserved for a time from foolish and vain pleasures, and kept from open sin. When about seventeen years of age, some pious soldiers, the fruit of John Haimes' exertions in Germany, were quartered at Dunbar, and through their prayers and exhortations, many persons were converted. The Methodist preachers also, from Newcastle, visited the town, and promoted the work of God. These things interested young Rankin ; and led to serious enquiry as to the nature of true religion. It was not, however, till he heard George Whitefield preach that he felt the need of a change of heart, and saw clearly the Christian privileges that were within his reach. A period of the severest mental conflict followed, at the close of which Rankin says "One morning, after breakfast, I arose and went into the garden, and sat down in a retired place, to mourn over my sad condition. I began to wrestle with God in an agony of prayer. I called out, 'Lord, I have wrestled long, and have not yet prevailed : O let me now prevail !' The whole passage of Jacob's wrestling with the angel came into my mind ; and I called out aloud, 'I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me !' In a moment the

cloud burst, and tears of love flowed from my eyes ; when these words were applied to my soul, many times over, 'And he blessed him there.' They came with the Holy Ghost, and with much assurance ; and my whole soul was overwhelmed with the presence of God. Every doubt of my acceptance was now gone, and all my fears fled away as the morning shades before the rising sun. I had the most distinct testimony that all my sins were forgiven through the blood of the covenant, and that I was a child of God, and an heir of eternal glory."

This great event of life once realised, its influence upon Mr. Rankin's future career was apparent. His views and pursuits were immediately directed to the promotion of the divine glory and the salvation of his soul ; he was subsequently led to pray in public, and there soon arose thoughts in his mind that he ought wholly to dedicate himself to God in preaching the gospel. Being disappointed, however, in his expectations of going to college, where he thought to prepare himself for the ministry, he undertook a commercial voyage to Charlestown, in South Carolina. Upon his return home, his impressions respecting his call to preach revived with increased power. Intercourse with Alexander Mather; and other Methodist preachers, and some visits of observation paid to several Methodist circuits, strengthened his conviction of duty, to which he at length so far yielded, as to take a text and preach his first sermon. This service, though accompanied with very painful impressions touching his own unfitness for such an engagement, was followed by a large increase of spiritual enjoyment and power. Shortly afterwards he rode a considerable distance to hear John Wesley preach. The remarkable impression that Wesley often produced upon the mind and heart even of strangers, is strikingly illustrated by the testimony of Mr. Rankin. He says, "As soon as I came near enough to hear the words of the hymn, I was so struck with the presence of God, that if I had not leaned on a friend's arm, I should have fallen to the ground. . . . As I had read all Mr. Wesley's works, and in particular his Journals, I had formed a very high opinion of him ; and the

moment I distinctly saw him, and heard his voice, such a crowd of ideas rushed upon my mind, as words cannot express. The union of soul I then felt with him was indescribable."* Mr. Rankin being introduced to John Wesley, a conversation followed that produced the most lively and grateful impression upon his mind and heart; and prepared the way for a further interview in London,—whither he repaired for the purpose of making known to him more fully his views and feelings. "He spoke to me," Mr. Rankin says, "as a father to a son, and advised me to decline all thoughts of temporal concerns, and go into a circuit." After some hesitation, and no small amount of trembling, Mr. Rankin consented to labour wherever John Wesley thought proper to send him. This was in the year 1761. He first supplied for Mr. Murlin in the Sussex Circuit, and afterwards travelled in Sheffield, Devonshire, and Cornwall, at which latter place he was appointed the assistant.

In 1769, though stationed to the Sussex Circuit, Mr. Rankin had the distinguished favour of accompanying John Wesley in his tour through the kingdom: and the following year he was again privileged to travel with him into the west of England. These visitations gave Mr. Rankin an enlarged knowledge of Wesley's religious views, and of the system of Methodism generally; and, on the other hand, afforded Wesley an opportunity of forming a high estimate of the integrity and worth of his companion.

* The first time *John Nelson* saw Wesley was at Moorfields. "As soon as he got upon the stand, (Nelson says,) he stroked back his hair, and turned his face towards where I stood, and I thought fixed his eyes on me: his countenance struck such an awful dread upon me, before I heard him speak, that it made my heart beat like the pendulum of a clock; and when he did speak, I thought his whole discourse was aimed at me: when he had done, I said 'This man can tell the secrets of my heart: he hath fully described the disease of my soul; but he hath not left me there, for he hath shewed me the remedy, even the blood of Jesus.' Then was my soul filled with consolation through hope, that God for Christ's sake would save me; neither did I doubt in such manner any more, till within twenty-four hours of the time, when the Lord wrote a pardon on my heart."

The mission to the American colonies had now been established four years ; but with the conduct of some of the preachers, especially in reference to the administration of the sacraments, Wesley was not altogether satisfied. To secure a fuller enforcement, therefore, of his ecclesiastical views, Mr. Rankin was appointed, in 1773, as general superintendent, with power to carry out Wesleyan Methodism, in the colonies, in strict harmony with the system at home. Mr. Rankin's early Scotch training, and his intercourse with the founder of Methodism, qualified him to grapple at once with the incipient evil,—as it was then judged. A stern disciplinarian, he failed not to magnify his office ; and within a few weeks of his landing in America, he assembled the preachers in Conference, and obtained their unanimous assent to the authority of John Wesley, and to the doctrines and discipline of the Methodists, as contained in the Minutes of the British Conference. The affairs of the societies had not been long thus settled, to the satisfaction of those who were at their head, before the American war broke out ; the Americans having formally resolved, on the 2nd of July, 1776, that “the United Colonies are and ought to be free and independent States.” At this period, Methodism in America was in a prosperous and a very encouraging state ; but a test oath being enforced, that was deemed utterly incompatible with a faithful regard to counter-oaths, and loyalty towards the mother-country, all the preachers, with one exception, resolved immediately to return to this country.

Mr. Rankin's re-appointment to the home-work followed ; and after travelling a few years in the Metropolis, in Kent, and at Bristol, he was subsequently stationed, at his own request, by John Wesley, as a supernumerary for London, in the year 1783. About the year 1796 he entered into business, and, according to the Methodist rule, his name was withdrawn from the published Minutes of Conference ;* by

* Mr. Rankin's name, by what at first sight appears a remarkable omission, is not found in Hill's Arrangement, or in the Obituary

the kind providence of God, his temporal wants were met ; and he records with praise God's many mercies to him, adding, "I have bread to eat, and am enabled to owe no man anything but love." He continued to preach once or twice every Lord's-day, and attend the several religious services that were held at the New Chapel, till within a few months of his death. On the 17th of May, 1810, he finished his course with joy, after having faithfully served God in his generation.

The Rev. Joseph Benson concludes a narrative of Mr. Rankin's last days by remarking, "We highly respect the memory of a man who, in various and trying situations of life, both at home and abroad, maintained for upwards of fifty years an unblemished character. This, through divine grace, did Mr. Rankin. In short, he was a man truly devoted to God his Saviour ; and in death witnessed a good confession."

records of the Conference ; neither does it appear in any list of those preachers who "have desisted from travelling." Myles, in his Chronological History, affixes to Mr. Rankin's name the mark that denotes one who has "departed from the work ;" and assigns the year 1787 as the period of this departure. By a reference, however, to the Minutes of Conference, it will be seen that Mr. Rankin continued to be stationed in London, as a supernumerary, down to the year 1795. In 1796 the name is "dropped." *Why ?*—Mr. Rankin was a truly godly man, though, it is said, in a few things somewhat eccentric. The Rev. Thomas Jackson, too, selects him as one of those early Methodist preachers whose "lives" are worthy of being preserved as grateful memorials of former days ; and the closing period of Mr. Rankin's life is attested to by Mr. Benson as one of marked Christian consistency. *Probably* Mr. Rankin's name disappears in the year 1796, because in that year an old rule of the Large Minutes was again confirmed and published by the Conference, to the effect, that any preacher entering into business should be no longer considered as a travelling preacher. The venerable George Marsden, whose recollection of early times is still strong, and who was appointed in the year 1796 to the London circuit, in reply to an enquiry on this subject, says, "I believe that Mr. Rankin was faithful to the end as a Christian, and also faithful as a Methodist. About the year 1796 he entered into a small business of a commercial nature, and I suppose that his name would then be left off the Minutes."

THE PRESS.

Next to the preaching of the everlasting gospel, the *Press* stands out as the symbol of the most powerful means of good that the world knows. John Wesley, who in this, as in a score of other things of moment, was fifty to a hundred years in advance of his age, early recognised the importance and right use of cheap literature. By his own plain, and terse, and logical writings, as well as by the popular poetry of his brother Charles, he awakened an attention to evangelical truth, and defended and sustained the cause of practical godliness, with an effect second only to the effect produced by the word he preached with such remarkable power and success.

Amongst "his sons in the gospel" around the death-bed, George Whitefield,—who at the time was Wesley's *Book Steward*, stands as manifestly suggestive of this department of usefulness.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

George Whitefield, unlike his great namesake, does not appear to have gained much celebrity as a *preacher*,—though by his integrity and Christian courtesy, he was highly respected by all who knew him. In 1781, John Wesley speaks of him as his "new fellow-traveller ;" and he continued the travelling companion of Wesley down to the year 1785, when, without being admitted "on trial," his name appears amongst the preachers for the London circuit. In 1789, Mr. Whitefield received the appointment of Book Steward, and remained a resident in or near London to the close of a term of near eighty years. He died in peace, October the 24th, 1832.

Whatever reputation may belong to John Wesley as a *preacher*, or as the *Founder* of a religious society, perhaps in no one respect does he appear more truly great than when viewed as an *author*. The ready and entire subordination of the scholar, the college critic and disputant, and the man of refined taste, to the purposes of godly instruction, demands

the most profound admiration. The wide range of subjects embraced by his publications calls also for special remark and commendation ;—his grammars in five different languages, and his classical exercises, his English dictionary,* his compendium of logic, his history of England, his short Roman history and his ecclesiastical history, his system of natural philosophy, his notes on the old and new Testaments, his Christian Library in fifty volumes, his monthly magazine which he himself continued for fourteen years, his numerous polemical works and treatises, his one hundred and forty sermons—the greater portion most carefully prepared and published as standard pieces of doctrinal, practical, and experimental theology, his invaluable poetical and musical works—numbering more than fifty separate publications, and his abridgments and extracts of the best works of other authors, extending to more than one hundred, each containing a preface more or less instructive, of his own—his political tracts, and his published answers, addresses, and letters, (some of the latter published in the public journals of the day, most carefully chosen)—all these publications issued from John Wesley's pen, or passed under its careful correction, whilst he travelled more miles, and preached more sermons, year by year, for fifty years in succession, than any man living,—and all this by a man whose *profession* was not that of an *author*, and at a time when no *demand* for books created a market of supply, but when the very *taste* for reading, on the part of the public, had to be formed. And in addition to the above

* A curious little book, entitled "*The Complete English Dictionary, explaining most of those hard words which are found in the best English writers. By a Lover of good English and common sense. N.B. The author assures you, he thinks this is the best English Dictionary in the world. London. Printed by Strahans, etc., 1753.*" A characteristic "Preface to the Reader," abounding with the keenest irony and the purest wit—concludes by saying "Many are the mistakes in all the other *English* dictionaries which I have yet seen. Whereas I can truly say, I know of none in this ; and I conceive the reader will believe me ; for if I had, I should not have left it there. Use then this help, till you find a better." "A Methodist" is defined as "one that lives according to the method laid down in the Bible."

it ought to be known, that it was John Wesley who by his cheap publications and liberal mode of circulation, originated a system of instruction for the masses, not surpassed in spirit and plan at the present day of popular serials and cheap literature and tract distribution! The day has yet to come when Wesley's claim upon the homage of this country shall be recognised, were it only for his free and generous use of the press—a use not made for gain, but for godliness,—not for the achievement of a triumph, but the promotion of the truth,—not for purposes of personal honour, but that he might be useful to man, and be able to augment the glory of God. The closing scene of this apostolic and laborious man, would have lacked one of its most appropriate rewards, had there been no one present to remind us, not only of men and things that may pass away and be forgotten, but of the imperishable monuments raised by Wesley's *writings* to his own immortal fame. So long as "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report"—shall continue to be regarded as objects of good sense and good taste—so long will the truly wise, and really great "if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."*

* How is it when any history is written of a great religious institution, to the principles of which Christians of different denominations have been committed, the name of *Wesley* is generally passed over with a studied silence! Surely when the "Corresponding secretary" of the Religious Tract Society wrote its Jubilee memorial, (a beautiful octavo volume of some 700 pages,) he might have found space to name John Wesley,—and have honoured himself and his work in doing so. Mr. Jones thinks it must "be interesting to trace the first efforts which were made to diffuse divine truth by means of letters." It is therefore sought to discover the origin, etc. of tract distribution—societies and names being mentioned that assist to make up the history of the past. But why was the name of the man entirely omitted who saw the value and power of a "Tract" three quarters of a century before the Tract Society was founded,—and who for more than fifty years sustained a diligent and liberal use of the press—and who in his latest dying bequest desired that his sermon on the love of God "should be scattered abroad and given to everybody." But it is not *popular* to give a favour-

THE DISPENSARY SYSTEM.

Several particulars in the picture before us indicate *the art of healing*; and suggest, though somewhat indirectly, the remarkable *medical* services Wesley rendered his suffering fellow-creatures. The account of these services is so full of interest and instruction, that it ought to be given in his own words. His letter to the Rev. Mr. Perronet, (entitled "*A plain Account of the People called Methodists*,") describes the origin and progress of the Methodist society, notes what was done to meet the "care of temporal things," and "send relief to the poor," and then states the arrangement made to "heal the sick." "But I was still in pain," Wesley says, "for many of the poor were sick; there was so great expense, and so little profit. And first, I resolved to try, whether they might not receive more benefit in the hospitals. Upon the trial, we found there was indeed less expense, but no more good done than before. I then asked the advice of

able prominence to Methodism! *Be it so!* Sooner or later, however, as *prejudice* breaks down, the *facts* of John Wesley's history will speak for themselves. The man who published so many different kinds of "Addresses," "Dialogues," "Thoughts," "Advices," "Short Accounts," "Remarks," and a "Word"—to a sabbath-breaker, to a swearer, to a drunkard, to a street-walker, to a smuggler, to a condemned malefactor, to a protestant, to a freeholder, etc.,—and who sold these tracts at a cost that in the present day would be considered cheap,—and even sometimes printed on the title page, "*This book is not to be sold, but given away*,"—is not the man to be passed over when every nook and corner is looked into to discover a tract writer or distributor! In 1745 Wesley says, "We had within a short time given away some thousands of little tracts among the common people. And it pleased God hereby to provoke others to jealousy. Insomuch that the Lord Mayor had ordered a large quantity of papers, dissuading from cursing and swearing, to be printed and distributed to the Train-bands. And this day, '*An Earnest Exhortation to Serious Repentance*' was given at every church-door in or near London, to every person who came out; and one left at the house of every householder who was absent from church." We make not these remarks in any boastful spirit, but that we may magnify the grace of God, when we protest against the undeserved neglect which is sometimes shown to the name and memory of one of His most laborious and useful servants.

several physicians for them ; but still it profitted not. I saw the poor people pining away, and several families ruined, and that without remedy. At length I thought of a kind of desperate expedient. 'I will prepare, and give them physic myself.' For six or seven and twenty years, I had made anatomy and physic the diversion of my leisure hours, though I never properly studied them, unless for a few months when I was going to America, where I imagined I might be of some service to those who had no regular physician among them. I applied to it again. I took into my assistance an apothecary, and an experienced surgeon ; resolving, at the same time, not to go out of my depth, but to leave all difficult and complicated cases to such physicians as the patients should choose." Arrangements being completed, notice was given that all who pleased might come, and Wesley would give them the best advice and the best medicine he had. This plan of relief, commenced at the Foundry, at the close of the year 1745, was immediately rewarded with some extraordinary cures, which encouraged its continuance for several years, "with more and more success."

Without venturing upon any very positive assertion on the subject, we do not hesitate to ask, Did not John Wesley, by this "kind of desperate expedient," suggest the *Dispensary system*, at present so beneficially extended throughout the land ? The fact that the *Finsbury Dispensary*, though one of the oldest known, was not founded till the year 1770, and that its location is in the very neighbourhood where Wesley, twenty years before, had first impressed the public mind so strongly in favour of this new charity,—supplies, it is submitted, some evidence in proof of Wesley's claim to be adjudged as *the originator of Dispensaries*.*

Hospitals or Infirmaries are undoubtedly of very ancient

* A medical gentleman of Leeds,—(to whom I am indebted for the suggestion respecting the origin of Dispensaries,) reputed as eminently intelligent and skilful in his own profession, and well known and respected in a large circle of friends as extensively and correctly informed on all matters relating to Methodist literature and history,

date. As charitable establishments, where wards are provided for the reception and cure of the sick, or of such persons as have met with accidental injuries, they are almost coeval with Christianity. For many centuries they were allied to the monastic institutions of the church, and were richly endowed ; being at the same time fearfully contaminated with the evils that in the middle ages darkened and disgraced the church. At a later period, and as a result of the Reformation, they were to a great extent freed from these abuses ; and they now exist for the most beneficent of purposes in all the capitals of Europe, and every considerable city of the civilized world. The *Dispensary*, however, (that is, "a place in which medicines are dispensed to the poor, and medical advice given gratis,") is of modern date : and

has declared to me, that the unfriendly criticisms so freely given on Wesley's *Primitive Physic*, are altogether unwarrantable. He affirms, that, judged of in comparison with other non-professional works of the same class, and of the same date, the *Primitive Physic* is incomparably superior to anything he knows. "But," it is objected, "Wesley had no right to step out of his own calling, and meddle with the affairs of another profession." Wesley's own statement, given above, respecting his qualification to act as he did, is perhaps his best defence. *Usage*, also, it may be observed, was more in favour of such a procedure a century or two ago, than in the present day. Ejected non-conformist ministers often practised physic to obtain a livelihood. Baxter, at Kidderminster, successfully assisted his people with advice and medicine ; and in his *Saints' Everlasting Rest* says, "It is an unspeakable comfort to me, that God hath made me an instrument for the recovery of so many from bodily diseases, and saving their natural lives." And the saintly George Herbert, in describing the completeness of a country parson, strongly recommends attention to the art of healing. He says, "It is easy for any scholar to attain to such a measure of physick as may be of much use to him, both for himself and others. This is done by seeing one anatomy, reading one book of physick, having one herball by him." He afterwards recommends the use of *herbs*, instead of *drugs* of the same nature, and advises to make "the garden the shop ;" adding, "for home-bred medicines are both more easie for the parson's purse, and more familiar for all men's bodies." He further requires the parson "to premise prayers, for this is to cure like a parson, and this raiseth the action from the shop to the church."

until some better explanation be given of its origin, we are disposed to place it amongst the numerous other things that show to what extent John Wesley was in advance of his age, and how keen an eye he had to see into any great social want, and no less ready a Christian benevolence to discover and provide a remedy. But, be this as it may, the case in hand fairly illustrates the collateral good of a *temporal* nature obtained by multitudes through the Christian *philanthropy* of John Wesley.

Designedly prominent as this point is made, it is not intended to imply that it arose out of anything peculiar to Wesleyan Methodism: the power of our common Christianity gave it birth. Still, from respect to truth and fairness, it should be added, that this care for human kind was much more effectively expressed by John Wesley, than by religious people around him. The principle, however, embodied in the general remark, is—*that all schemes and efforts, even of a temporal nature, really beneficial to man, originate in the church of Christ, and are worked out and sustained mainly and substantially by Christian men.* A blustering and vain infidelity has of late years arrogated to itself a patronage of the working classes. The assumption is as false as vain; and the right to it is utterly and indignantly denied. Not choosing to note the disappointments and sorrows into which these misguided men have oft led their deluded followers, it is yet unhesitatingly affirmed that the great and charitable projects of the present day, which aim at the relief of human woe, and seek to elevate and benefit *the masses*, have sprung out of *the earnest, practical Christianity, exemplified by the godly of every church.* Wesley's career strikingly illustrates this. To the prisoner his earliest labours were devoted, and his careful savings bestowed upon the debtor and the distressed; throughout life he remained the faithful friend of the slave,—the last letter he wrote, being one of encouragement to persevere, addressed to Wilberforce. At Kingswood, even before the United Societies were formed, and at the Foundry, at the very beginning of Methodism, he established schools for the instruction of the

young ; with his own means, and by the liberality his example and influence called forth, the hungry were fed, and the naked clothed,—many destitute widows and orphans were provided with a home,—poor and struggling tradesmen were assisted with small loans of money, on terms safe and honourable to themselves,—and the sick, by thousands, were supplied with advice and medicine gratuitously, hundreds of whom, though previously reported hopelessly ill, were recovered to health.

Our country has not been generally forgetful of the many men who have adorned, enriched, and blessed it. On the memory of the nation names are stereotyped, with grateful recollections, and in distinguished places commemorative statues have been erected to their honour. But whilst the genius and eloquence of a Burke enshrines the lasting fame of a Howard ; the chisel of the sculptor perpetuates the persevering benevolence of a Wilberforce ; and the historian hands down to our children, as so many household words, the names of our triumphant warriors and successful statesmen ; let not the honoured name of Wesley be slighted or forgotten. In many respects he outdid them all. In the unreserved consecration of himself to the intents and purposes of a godly life, he could say, "*this one thing I do :*" but this "one thing" gave a character to all besides. In certain instances of recognised greatness, a prevailing idea has absorbed the whole soul, and monopolised its powers in the advancement of one solitary object. Wesley's ruling principle expanded wide as the universe, and, by the grace of God, remained strong and active to the end. The man, then, that lived at Oxford on £28 per annum, out of an income of £120, and gave to the poor £92,—he who received upwards of £3,000 a year, the produce of a collection made for the spread of the gospel, and only appropriated £30 of that sum for his own personal expenses,—he who, though not born to inherit a fortune, yet by his industry and talent gained the means to give away, in the course of his lifetime, a sum, it is said, of not less than £30,000 ; he who, in the month of January, when upwards of eighty years of age,

could walk for five successive days through the streets of London, when the melting snow lay ankle deep, and his "feet were steeped in snow-water nearly from morning till evening," that he might *beg* money wherewith to provide clothes, as well as coals and bread, for the poor,—he who, by his pen, and personal influence and care, provided so largely for the education of the children of the poor,—he whose heart so practically and earnestly pitied the prisoner and the slave,—and he who so shrewdly discovered a means of relief for the sick and needy, and thereby originated a national charity that has brought hope and health to afflicted myriads,—deserves to be remembered by us, and to be commended to our children ; not only because of his evangelical labours, but as a special gift of God to our race, and as one of the *greatest philanthropists* of this or any other land.

WESLEY'S AFFECTION FOR CHILDREN.

In the last place, and as the least only in regard to the object that suggests the thought, *Master Rogers*, son of James Rogers—the little boy near the foot of the bed, pleasingly illustrates a disposition possessed by John Wesley that equally marks his greatness as his goodness : Wesley dearly loved little children ;—he did more,—he frequently and kindly *noticed* them. Not a few of the venerable men who have, within these few years, gone down to the peaceful grave, delighted to tell their children, and their grandchildren of their own earliest recollections of Wesley. A small silver coin has been sometimes shown, the token, when first presented, of Wesley's affection ; now a valued family relic. And the remembrance of the time when upon the head Wesley laid his hand, with a patriarch's benediction, has been a source of something more than mere pleasure—even a reverential confidence that God, who so often heard and favoured His honoured servant, accompanied *then* His servant's prayer with His own blessing.

John Wesley was strict to a proverb ; and the discipline which he enforced at his Kingswood school might appear to some persons unnatural and harsh, yet he never failed to win

young people to himself: "The children cling about me," he could say, "and drink in every word." "About one," Wesley writes, "I preached at Oldham; and was surprised to see all the streets lined with little children, and such children as I never saw till now. Before preaching they only ran round me; but after it a whole troop, boys and girls, closed me in, and would not be content till I shook each of them by the hand." And at Bolton, where Wesley preached on Easter-day 1785, some five hundred Sunday School children were present: "such an army of them," he says, "got about me when I came out of the chapel, that I could scarce disengage myself from them." All this must have been the result of the attractive power of his goodness. Children have quick eyes and shrewd hearts, and soon discover kindness; and whilst a very little gruff speech and cold conduct will repel them, real affection readily creates confidence and love.

John Wesley—who to persons of age and of all ranks, was the free, the accomplished, the Christian gentleman, appeared to children particularly attentive and courteous. His very appearance, remarkable for its neatness, was said to bespeak favour at first sight; and his innocent and pleasant wit, together with his large store of information and his fund of interesting anecdote, made him the most welcome guest wherever young people were assembled.

Whilst Wesley lay on his death-bed "Master Rogers" was residing with his father in the same house, and would be undoubtedly brought to witness a scene, of which he would be a highly interesting, and probably an intelligent spectator. It is now only a few months since the little boy, grown an old man, has departed this life; the last remnant of that witnessing group: but for many years before his decease, the recollection of the death-bed of Wesley, was one of the most vivid and valued, and oft-told reminiscences of early days.

CONCLUSION.

In bringing these observations to a close allow me to remark, that it is not my purpose to attempt, by any exciting peroration, to create a feeling of mere amazement and plea-

sure; my business is of a more quiet, and earnest, and, may I hope, more permanent character. I have one definite object in view. *I want you to realise that picture!* To note its fulness, and feel its force. I am anxious that its imagery should be indelibly impressed upon your mind; and its moral and religious truth engraved upon your heart. If any of you choose to do so, you are at perfect liberty to look upon that painting as a work of high art; you may criticise it if you will,—you may point to the unity of design apparent on the entire canvass, and of the easy centralization of every incident and every particular upon the principal object of the painting; you may speak of the natural order and graceful arrangement of the group of witnesses,—of the poetry and repose of that medical student's head,—and so forth: all this is legitimate; but if you rest satisfied with such a treatment of the "Death-bed of Wesley" my object is not gained, nor the true purpose of your presence here this evening answered.

The motto with which we commenced this lecture, contains the principle wherewith I am anxious to enforce an application. "THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL BE IN EVERLASTING REMEMBRANCE." No more are we at liberty to forget the services of man, than to neglect the mercies of God. To the holy life, the triumphant death, and the gracious services of that apostolic man, John Wesley, I have been now privileged to direct your attention. "*Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.*" Call to remembrance former days; and when your review of such a life raises your estimate of the blessedness of the righteous, to its high and proper point, turn to HIM who is no respecter of persons, whose gifts are large, and impartial, and kind,—and then, with a strong and honest heart, pray, "*Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!*"

One word more: I have just now spoken of "indelible impressions." Unfortunately, words, thoughts, and all such matters, are too often the least impressive things we deal with. Would, therefore, that I could transfix a *sun picture*, a perfect *photograph*, of Wesley's death-bed, upon the mind

and heart of all present. The regret of the impossible, is, however, relieved by the appearance of an adequate substitute. Without hesitation, and without fear of a suspicion of any selfish or pecuniary advantage to be derived from the suggestion, I respectfully and earnestly commend you, one and all, to provide yourselves with a copy of this exquisitely beautiful engraving of that splendid and very valuable painting. At a very trifling cost you may adorn your walls, or enrich your portfolios, with a work of art, not only creditable to the engraver and publisher,—which is its least commendation, but highly advantageous to the possessor. Thus provided with the material for suggestion, whenever your eye rests upon that print, you may call the righteous to remembrance,—and in the recollection of any observations you have this evening favoured me with the opportunity of making, you will, I trust, benefit your own hearts, and *thereby* secure to me my best, and, indeed, my only reward,—the pleasing and grateful belief that I have done *you* some little good.

H. W. WALKER, PRINTER, BRIGGATE, LEEDS.

School of Theology
at Claremont

A 9848

- 1 The Rev. John Wesley, A.M.;
supposed to be uttering his last
memorable words, "THE BEST
OF ALL IS, GOD IS WITH US."
- 2 Rev. Peard Dickinson, A.M.; for
nine years the reader of the
prayers at City Road Chapel
- 3 Rev. Joseph Bradford, the most
intimate and tried friend of the
venerable founder of Methodism.
- 4 Miss Sarah Wesley, daughter
of Mrs. Charles Wesley.
- 5 A Medical Assistant to Dr.
Whitehead.
- 6 Mrs. Charles Wesley.
- 7 Rev. Thomas Rankin, Supernumer-
ary.
- 8 Mrs. Esther Ann Rogers, well known
to the Methodist Connexion for
her valuable "Life and Letters."
- 9 Miss Richie, afterwards Mrs.
Mortimer.



- 10 Rev. James Rogers.
 - 11 Rev. James Creighton, A.M.; one
of the readers at City Road
Chapel.
 - 12 Master Rogers, son of the Rev.
James Rogers, and the only per-
son now living who was present
at the time.
 - 13 Robert Carr Brackenbury, Esq., of
Raithby Hall, Lincolnshire.
 - 14 Rev. Thomas Broadbent.
 - 15 Rev. John Broadbent.
 - 16 John Horton, Esq., one of the Exe-
cutors of Mr. Wesley's Will.
 - 17 Rev. Alexander Mather.
 - 18 Rev. George Whitfield, (Book Stew-
ard.)
 - 19 Rev. Jonathan Edmondson.
 - 20 Dr. Whitehead, the Friend and
Biographer of Mr. Wesley.
- The Bible, Chair, and Portrait, are
drawn from the originals.

KEY PLATE TO THE ENGRAVING OF

The Death of the Rev. John Wesley A.M.

Manchester, published by Thomas Agnew & Sons 24. July, 1836.

Manchester, published by Thomas Agnew & Sons 24. July, 1836.

41583

Hall, Samuel Romilly.

32 Illustrative records of John Wesley and early
4 Methodism; a lecture, founded on Marshall Clax-
ton's painting of the death-bed of the Rev. J.
Wesley; delivered in the Wesleyan school room,
Red Bank, Stocks, Manchester, July 3, 1856.
London, Hamilton Adams, 1856.

64p. illus. 22cm.

1. Wesley, John, 1703-1791--Pictures, illustra-
tions, etc. 2. Methodism--Pictures, illustra-
tions, etc. I. Title.

CCSC/ef

A9848

